

V. I. LENIN

NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION

V·I·LENIN

SELECTED WORKS

IN TWELVE VOLUMES

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V • I • LENIN

SELECTED WORKS

VOLUME IX

NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

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PREFACE

THE present volume of *Selected Works* coincides with Part I of Vol. V of the Russian six-volume edition of the *Selected Works* of V. I. Lenin prepared by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute, Moscow, published in 1933.

The explanatory notes given in the preceding volumes of *Selected Works* were translated from the above-mentioned Russian edition. Developments during the past few years, however, imperatively call for a thorough revision of these notes, and the M. E. L. Institute is now engaged in revising them for publication in Russian. This work of revision is taking longer than was anticipated, however; and to wait until it is completed would delay the publication of the remaining volumes of the English edition, Vols. IX, X, XI and XII, and thus cause the *main* thing, *viz.*, the text of Lenin's works, to be withheld from the English reader. The publishers therefore believe that they are acting in the English readers' interest in deciding—by agreement with the M. E. L. Institute—to omit the explanatory notes from the remaining volumes and complete the publication of the English edition of *Selected Works* without further delay.

PART 1

FROM WAR COMMUNISM TO THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

THE TRADE UNIONS, THE PRESENT SITUATION AND THE MISTAKES OF COMRADE TROTSKY

Speech Delivered at a Joint Meeting of Delegates to the Eighth Congress of Soviets, Members of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions and of the Moscow Gubernia Council of Trade Unions—Members of the R.C.P.(B.), December 30, 1920.

COMRADES, first of all I must apologise for violating the rules of procedure, for of course, in order to take part in a discussion one should have heard the report, the co-report and the discussion. Unfortunately, I am so unwell that I was unable to do this. But I was able yesterday to read the principal printed documents and to prepare my remarks. Naturally, the violation of the rules of procedure I have mentioned will cause you some inconvenience; not knowing what others have said, I may repeat things, and, perhaps, leave unanswered what should be answered. But I could not do otherwise.

My principal material is Comrade Trotsky's pamphlet *The Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions*. Comparing this pamphlet with the theses he submitted to the Central Committee,¹ in reading it very carefully, I am astonished at the number of theoretical errors and crying inexactitudes that are concentrated in it. How was it possible for anyone, in entering into a big Party discussion on this question, to write such a poor thing instead of something most carefully thought out? I shall briefly indicate the main points which in my opinion contain fundamental theoretical errors.

Trade unions are not only historically necessary, but historically inevitable organisations of the industrial proletariat which under

¹ This refers to the "preliminary draft of theses" entitled "The Trade Unions and Their Future Role," submitted by Trotsky to the plenum of the Central Committee of the Party on November 8, 1920.—Ed.

the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat embrace nearly the whole of that class. This is the most fundamental consideration, but Comrade Trotsky constantly forgets it, fails to use it as his starting point, fails to appreciate it. And yet the subject he deals with—"The Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions"—is a boundlessly wide one.

It follows from what I have said that throughout the process of effecting the dictatorship of the proletariat the role of the trade unions is extremely important. But what is this role? In passing to the discussion of this question, which is one of the most fundamental theoretical questions, I come to the conclusion that this role is an extremely peculiar one. On the one hand embracing, enlisting in the ranks of their organisations all the industrial workers, the trade unions are organisations of the ruling, dominant, governing class, of the class which is exercising its dictatorship, of the class which is exercising state coercion. But the trade unions are not state organisations, not organisations for coercion, they are educational organisations, organisations that enlist, that train; they are schools, schools of administration, schools of management, schools of Communism. They are not the ordinary type of school, for there are no teachers and pupils; what we have is an extremely peculiar combination of what capitalism has left us, and could not but leave us, and what the revolutionary advanced detachments, so to speak, the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat, promotes from its own ranks. And to speak about the role of the trade unions without taking these truths into account means inevitably committing a number of errors.

The place the trade unions occupy in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat is, if we may so express it, between the Party and the state power. In the transition to socialism the dictatorship of the proletariat is inevitable, but this dictatorship is not effected by the organisations which embrace all the industrial workers. Why? We can read about this in the theses of the Second Congress of the Communist International on the role of political parties in general. I will not dwell on this here. What we get is that the Party, so to speak, absorbs into itself the vanguard of the prole-

tariat, and this vanguard effects the dictatorship of the proletariat. Without a foundation like the trade unions the dictatorship cannot be effected, state functions cannot be fulfilled. These functions in their turn have to be fulfilled through the medium of a number of special institutions also of a new type, namely, the Soviet apparatus. Wherein lies the peculiarity of the position in regard to the practical conclusions that have to be drawn? It lies in the fact that the trade unions establish connection between the vanguard and the masses, the trade unions by their daily work convince the masses, the masses of the class which alone is capable of carrying us from capitalism to Communism. On the other hand, the trade unions are a "reservoir" of state power. This is what the trade unions are in the period of transition from capitalism to Communism. In general, it will be impossible to achieve this transition unless the class which alone has been trained by capitalism for large-scale production and which alone has been divorced from small-proprietor interests is in the lead. But it is impossible to effect the dictatorship of the proletariat through the organisations which embrace the whole of that class, because, not only in our country, which was one of the most backward capitalist countries, but in all capitalist countries, the proletariat is still so split up, so degraded, so corrupted in some places (namely, by imperialism in certain countries) that the organisations which embrace the whole class cannot directly effect the proletarian dictatorship. The dictatorship can be effected only by the vanguard which has absorbed into itself the revolutionary energy of the class. Thus we get, as it were, a system of cogwheels. And such is the mechanism of the very foundation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the very essence of the transition from capitalism to Communism. From this alone it is evident that when in his first thesis Comrade Trotsky, in pointing to "ideological confusion," speaks of the crisis especially and particularly in the trade unions, there is something in this that is fundamentally wrong in principle. If we are to speak of a crisis, we can only do so after analysing the political situation. It is Trotsky who is suffering from "ideological confusion," because precisely on this fundamental question of the role of the trade unions from the point of

view of the transition from capitalism to Communism he lost sight of, failed to take into account, the fact that here we have a complicated system of cogwheels and that there cannot be a simple system; for the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be effected by organisations that embrace the whole of the proletariat. It is impossible to effect the dictatorship without having a number of "transmission belts" from the vanguard to the masses of the advanced class, and from the latter to the masses of the toilers. In Russia these masses are the peasants. These masses do not exist in other countries; but even in the most advanced countries there are non-proletarian, or not purely proletarian, masses. This alone is really sufficient to give rise to ideological confusion. Trotsky groundlessly accuses others of this.

When I take up the question of the role of the trade unions in production, I see the fundamental mistake Trotsky makes, namely, that all the time he speaks about this "principle," about the "general principle." All his theses are written from the point of view of the "general principle." This alone makes the presentation of the question fundamentally wrong, quite apart from the fact that the Ninth Congress of the Party said enough and more than enough about the role of the trade unions in production, quite apart from the fact that in his own theses Trotsky himself quotes the perfectly clear statements of Lozovsky and Tomskey, who, in Trotsky's theses, serve as what the Germans call "whipping boys," or as objects on which one can exercise one's polemics. There are no differences in principle, and the choice of Tomskey and Lozovsky, who wrote things which Trotsky himself quotes, was unfortunate. We shall not find anything serious in the sphere of differences in principle, no matter how diligently we search for them. In general, the enormous mistake, the mistake in principle, lies in the fact that Comrade Trotsky is dragging the Party and the Soviet government backward by raising the question of "principle" now. Thank God, we have passed from principles to practical, businesslike work. We chattered enough about principles in the Smolny, and no doubt more than enough. Now, after three years, we have decrees on all points of the production problem, on a number of the constituent elements of

this problem; but such is the sad fate of decrees: we sign them, but we ourselves forget about them, and we ourselves fail to carry them out. And then arguments about principles, differences in principle are invented. Later on I shall quote a decree which deals with the question of the role of the trade unions in production, a decree which we have all forgotten, including myself, which I must confess.¹

The real differences that exist between us do not in the least concern questions of general principle, if we leave out of account those I have enumerated. I had to refer to the "disagreements" between Comrade Trotsky and myself that I enumerated because, in taking such a wide subject as "The Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions," Comrade Trotsky, I am convinced, committed a number of errors that are connected with the very essence of the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But if we leave these aside, the question arises: Why cannot we achieve that team work of which we stand so much in need? Because of our differences on the question of the method of approach to be adopted towards the masses, the method of winning the masses, of contacts with the masses. That is the whole point. And in this precisely lies the peculiar feature of the trade unions as institutions which were created under capitalism, which must inevitably exist in the period of transition from capitalism to Communism, and whose future is doubtful. This future, in which the existence of the trade unions will be doubtful, is a remote one, our grandchildren will talk about it. At present, however, the question is how to approach the masses, how to win them, how to establish contact with them, how to get the complicated system of transmission belts to work (the work of effecting the dictatorship of the proletariat). Note that when I speak of the complicated system of transmission belts I have not in mind the Soviet apparatus. What will be there in regard to a complicated system of transmission belts is a separate matter. At the moment I am only speaking in the abstract, and in principle, about the relations between classes in capitalist society; there we have a

¹ This refers to the decree on disciplinary comrades' courts.—*Ed.*

proletariat, non-proletarian toiling masses, a petty bourgeoisie, and a bourgeoisie. From this point of view, even if there were no bureaucracy in the apparatus of the Soviet government, we already get an extremely complicated system of transmission belts as a result of what capitalism created. And this is the first thing we must think of in raising the question of the difficulty of the "tasks" of the trade unions. I repeat, the real differences are not those that Comrade Trotsky sees, but about the question of how to win the masses, the question of how to approach them, of contacts with them. I must say that had we made a detailed study of our own practice, our own experience, even on a small scale, we would have avoided the hundreds of unnecessary "disagreements" and mistakes in principle with which Comrade Trotsky's pamphlet is replete. For example, whole theses in this pamphlet are devoted to the polemics against "Soviet trade unionism." There was not trouble enough, so a new bogey was invented! Who is this? Comrade Ryazanov. I have known Comrade Ryazanov for twenty years and a bit. You know him for a shorter time than I do, but by his works you know him no less than I do. You know very well that the proper appreciation of slogans is not one of his strong points—and he has strong points. Shall we then in theses depict remarks Comrade Ryazanov sometimes utters, not always appropriately, as "Soviet trade unionism"? Would that be taking things seriously? If we do that we shall have "Soviet trade unionism," "Soviet anti-peace-signing," and I don't know what else. There is not a single point on which some sort of Soviet "ism" could not be invented. [Ryazanov: "Soviet anti-Brestism."] ¹ Yes, quite right, "Soviet anti-Brestism."

And yet, while betraying this lack of seriousness, Comrade Trotsky commits a mistake himself. According to him, it is not the role of the trade unions in the workers' state to protect the material and spiritual interests of the working class. This is a mistake. Comrade Trotsky talks about the "workers' state." Excuse me, this is an abstraction. It was natural for us to write about the workers' state in 1917; but those who now ask, "Why protect, against whom

¹ I.e., opposition to signing the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty. See *Selected Works*, Vol. VII.—Ed. Eng. ed.

protect the working class, there is no bourgeoisie now, the state is a workers' state," commit an obvious mistake. Not altogether a workers' state; that is the whole point. This is where Comrade Trotsky makes one of his fundamental mistakes. We have now passed from general principles to businesslike discussion and decrees, and we are being dragged away from the practical and businesslike. This will not do. In the first place, our state is not really a workers' state, but a workers' and peasants' state. And from this follow many things. [*Bukharin*: "What kind of state? A workers' and peasants' state?"] And although Comrade Bukharin behind me shouts, "What kind of state? A workers' and peasants' state?" I will not stop to answer him.¹ Those who care to, let them recall the Congress of Soviets which has just come to a close, they will find the reply in that.

But more than that. It is evident from our Party programme—a document with which the author of the "A B C of Communism" is familiar—it is evident from this programme that our state is a workers' state with bureaucratic distortions. And we should have stuck this sad—what shall I call it, label?—on it. Here you have, then, the reality of the transition. Well, the state has in practice taken this form; does that mean that the trade unions have nothing to protect, that we can dispense with them in the protection of the material and spiritual interests of the entirely organised proletariat? No. That is an entirely wrong argument theoretically. It carries us into the sphere of abstractions, or of the ideal which we shall achieve in fifteen or twenty years' time, and I am not sure that we shall achieve it even in that time. We are confronted with reality, which we know very well—that is, if we do not allow ourselves to become intoxicated, to be carried away by intellectual talk or abstract arguments, or by what sometimes seems to be "theory," but what in fact is a mistake, a miscalculation of the specific features of the transition. Our present state is such that the entirely organised proletariat must protect itself, and we must utilise these workers' organisations for the purpose of protecting the workers from their own state and in order that the workers may protect

¹ Cf. the article "The Party Crisis" in the present volume, p. 28. —*Ed.*

our state. Both forms of protection are achieved by means of the peculiar interweaving of our state measures with our agreement, our coalescence with our trade unions.

I will have more to say about this coalescence later on. But this word alone is sufficient to show that to invent an enemy in the shape of "Soviet trade unionism" means committing a mistake, for the term coalescence means that there are *different* things that *have to coalesce*; the term "coalesce" implies that we must learn to utilise state measures for the purpose of protecting the material and spiritual interests of the entirely organised proletariat from this state. But when instead of the process of coalescing we shall have *coalesced* and *merged*, we shall gather at a congress at which there will be the businesslike discussion of practical experience and not of "disagreements" on principle, or abstract theoretical arguments. The attempt to find disagreements on principle with Comrades Tomsky and Lozovsky, whom Comrade Trotsky depicts as trade union "bureaucrats"—I shall deal later on with the question as to which side in this controversy betrays bureaucratic tendencies—is also inept. We know perfectly well that although Comrade Ryazanov sometimes betrays a slight weakness for inventing slogans at all costs, almost slogans of principle, Comrade Tomsky does not suffer from this vice, although he has other sins to answer for. Therefore it seems to me that it is going beyond all bounds to start a battle of principles on this question with Comrade Tomsky, as Comrade Trotsky does. I am positively astonished at this. There was a time when we all sinned a great deal in regard to factional, theoretical, and all sorts of other disagreements—of course, something useful came out of all this—but one would have thought that we had grown up since then. And it is time to drop inventing and exaggerating disagreements on principle and start on practical work. I have never heard it said that Tomsky was mainly a theoretician, that Tomsky laid claim to the title of theoretician; perhaps this is one of his defects, but that is another question. But that Tomsky, who has worked so well with the trade union movement, should—consciously or unconsciously is another question, I do not say that he always does it consciously—reflect, that in his position

he should reflect this complicated transition, and if something hurts the masses and they do not know what is hurting them and he does not know what is hurting them but raises a shout about it, I assert that that is something to his credit and not a defect. I am quite sure that Tomsky holds many partially mistaken theoretical views. And all of us, if we sit down at a table and write a properly thought out resolution or theses, will correct them all; perhaps we shall not correct them, because production work is more interesting than rectifying tiny theoretical disagreements.

Now I come to "industrial democracy." This, so to speak, is for Bukharin's benefit. We know perfectly well that every man has his little weaknesses, and even big men, including Bukharin, have their little weaknesses. If there is a catchword with a twist to it flying around he cannot refrain from being for it. At the plenum of the Central Committee on December 7 he wrote a resolution on industrial democracy with almost voluptuous passion. And the more I think about this "industrial democracy," the more clearly I see the theoretical fallacy of it, the lack of thought behind it; it is a hodge-podge and nothing else. And taking this as an example, we must, once again, at least at a Party meeting, say: "Fewer verbal twists, Comrade N. I. Bukharin—it will be more beneficial for you, for theory and for the republic." Industry is always necessary. Democracy is one of the categories in the political sphere alone. There can be no objection to the use of this word in a speech, or in an article. An article takes up and clearly expresses one relationship and no more. But when you transform this into a thesis, when you want to make a slogan of it to unite those who "agree" and those who do not agree, when you say, as Trotsky does, that the Party will have to "choose between two trends," it sounds very strange. I will deal separately with the question of whether the Party will have to "choose," and whose fault it is that the Party has been put in the position of having to "choose." Since it has turned out this way we must say: "At all events choose fewer theoretically wrong slogans which contain nothing but confusion, such as 'industrial democracy.'" Neither Trotsky nor Bukharin has clearly thought out the meaning of this term theoretically, and both

got confused. "Industrial democracy" gives rise to ideas which do not in the least belong to the circle of ideas with which they have become infatuated. They wanted to emphasise, they wanted to concentrate more attention on industry. To emphasise something in an article or a speech is one thing, but when this is transformed into theses and the Party has to choose, I say: Choose against this, because it is confusing. Industry is always necessary, democracy is not always necessary. The term "industrial democracy" gives rise to a number of utterly false ideas. We have not yet had time to wear out our boots since the time we started advocating individual management. We must not make a hodge-podge of things and create the danger of people becoming confused about when democracy is necessary, when individual management is necessary, and when dictatorship is necessary. Under no circumstances must we renounce dictatorship—I can hear Bukharin behind me shouting, "Quite true."

To proceed. Since September we have been talking about passing from preference to equalitarianism; we say it in the resolution of the general Party conference that was endorsed by the Central Committee. This is a difficult question, because in one way or another we have to combine equalitarianism with preference, and the one is the antithesis of the other. But after all is said and done we have studied Marxism a little and have learned how and when one can and should combine opposites; and the most important thing is that for the three and a half years of our revolution we have in practice repeatedly combined opposites.

Obviously, we must approach the question very cautiously and thoughtfully. Even at those deplorable plenums of the Central Committee¹ at which we got a group of seven and a group of eight and the celebrated "buffer group" of Comrade Bukharin, we discussed these questions of principle and established that the transition from preference to equalitarianism was not an easy one. And

¹ This refers to the plenums of the Central Committee held on November 8-9 and December 6, 1920, at which the tasks of the trade unions and the conflict between the water transport workers and the Cectran (Central Committee of Railway and Water Transport Workers' Union) were discussed.—*Ed.*

in order to carry out the decision of the September conference we must do a little hard work. We may combine these opposite terms in such a way as to produce a cacophony, and we can combine them in such a way as to produce a symphony. Preference means giving preference to one industry over all other necessary industries in view of its greater urgency. Preference in what? How much preference? These are difficult questions and I must say that mere zeal is not enough, and even a hero who, perhaps, has many excellent qualities, who is all right in his place, is not sufficient to settle them; we must know how to approach a very peculiar question. And so, if we do raise the question of preference and equalitarianism, we must first of all think about it very carefully, and this is exactly what we do not see in Comrade Trotsky's pamphlet. The more he revises his original theses the more numerous are his incorrect propositions. This is what we read in his last set of theses:

"In the sphere of *consumption*, i.e., the conditions of the personal existence of the toilers, it is necessary to pursue the line of equalitarianism. In the sphere of *production*, the principle of preference will long remain decisive for us. . . ." (Thesis 41, p. 31 of Trotsky's pamphlet.)

Theoretically this is utter confusion. It is absolutely wrong. Preference is preference, and preference without preference in consumption is nothing. If I get a preference that will give me an eighth of a pound of bread per day I will say: Thank you very much for nothing. Preference in production is preference in consumption. Otherwise preference is a dream, a nebulous cloud, and after all we are materialists. And the workers are materialists. They all say: If you are talking about preference, then give us bread, and clothes, and meat. That is what we understood—and now understand—when we discussed these questions for the hundredth time in connection with definite cases on the Council of Defence, when one member demanded boots ¹ and said: "I am on an urgent job," and another said: "Give me boots, otherwise your urgent job workers will not hold out and all your urgency will have been in vain."

¹ I.e., quantities of boots for distribution among the workers in the particular industry or factory.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

And what we get is that in the theses the question of the relation between equalitarianism and preference is presented in an entirely wrong way. And in addition we get a retreat from what has been tested by practice and won. It must not be done that way, no good can come of it.

To proceed: the question of "coalescence." The best thing to do about "coalescence" at the present time would be to keep quiet about it. Speech is silver, but silence is golden. Why? Because we have already taken this coalescence up in a practical way; there is not a single large Gubernia¹ Council of National Economy, a large branch of the Supreme Council of National Economy, of the Commissariat for Ways and Communications, etc., where this is not taking place in practice. But are the results quite good? There's the rub. Study the *practical experience* of how this coalescence is being achieved and what is being achieved by it. The decrees introducing coalescence in this or that institution are so numerous that they are impossible to count. But we have not yet learned to study practically what has come of it all, what such-and-such coalescence has produced in such-and-such a branch of industry, what was the result of appointing such-and-such a member of the Gubernia Council of Trade Unions to such-and-such a post in the Gubernia Council of National Economy, how many months he practised this coalescence, etc. We have succeeded in inventing disagreements on principle on the question of coalescing, and in that we have committed a mistake; we are past masters in that art, but we are no good at studying and testing our experience. And when we have congresses of Soviets which, in addition to sections for the study of the agricultural regions from the point of view of this or that method of applying the Improvement of Agriculture Law, will set up sections to study the coalescing process, to study the results of this process in the flour-milling industry in the Saratov Gubernia, in the metal industry in Petrograd, in the coal industry in the Donbas, etc.; when these sections, having collected a heap of materials, will say: "We have studied such-and-such questions," I will say: "Yes, now we have got down to business, we have grown out

¹ Gubernia—a province.—Ed. Eng. ed.

of our infancy!" But if, after we have spent three years on coalescing, we are presented with "theses" in which disagreements on principle are invented concerning coalescence, what can be more deplorable and mistaken? We have taken the path of coalescence, and I have no doubt that we have done so correctly; but we have not yet studied the results of our experience as we should have done. That is why the only wise tactics to adopt on the question of coalescence is to remain silent.

We must study practical experience. I have signed decrees and orders containing practical instructions on coalescence, and practice is a hundred times more important than any theory. That is why when people say, "Let us talk about 'coalescence,'" I reply, "Let us study what we have done." I have not the least doubt that we have made many mistakes. Perhaps a large number of our decrees will also have to be amended. I agree, I am not in the least infatuated with decrees. But then give us practical proposals: change this and that. That will be a businesslike presentation of the question. That will not be unproductive labour. That will not lead to bureaucratic project-hatching. When I turn to part VI of Trotsky's pamphlet, "Practical Conclusions," I find that this is exactly what these practical conclusions suffer from. There we read that one-third to one-half of the members of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions and of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of National Economy shall be members of both bodies, and that in the case of collegiums, the inter-representation shall be from one-half to two-thirds, etc. Why? Just like that: "rule of thumb." It is true, of course, that such proportions are repeatedly laid down in our decrees precisely "by rule of thumb"; but why is it inevitable in decrees? I do not defend all decrees, and I do not want to make the decrees appear better than they really are. In them conventional magnitudes like one-half, one-third of the total membership, etc., are very often put in by rule of thumb. When a decree says that, it means: Try to do it like that, and later on we shall weigh up the results of your "trying." Later on we shall see what exactly came of it. And when we have seen what came of it we shall move forward. We are coalescing, and we shall continue to improve the

process, because we are becoming more practical and businesslike.

Have I begun to engage in "production propaganda"? It cannot be helped! In discussing the role of the trade unions in production it is necessary to touch on this question.

And so I pass to the question of production propaganda. This again is a practical question and we present it in a practical manner. State institutions for conducting production propaganda exist, they have already been created. I cannot say whether they are bad or good, they have to be tried; and there is no need to write "theses" on this question.

If we are to speak of the role of the trade unions in production as a whole, there is no need to say anything on the question of democracy except what is said about ordinary democracy. Tricky phrases like "industrial democracy" are wrong, and nothing will come of them. That's the first point. Secondly—production propaganda. Institutions have already been created. Trotsky's theses speak about production propaganda. This was unnecessary, because in this case "theses" are already obsolete. We do not yet know whether these institutions are good or bad. We shall try them, and then we shall express an opinion. Let us study them and investigate. Let us suppose that at a congress ten sections of ten men each are formed; they will ask: "Have you engaged in production propaganda? What has come of it?" After studying the matter we shall reward those who have been particularly successful and cast aside what has proved to be useless. We already have practical experience; it is slight, not much, it is true, but we have it, and we are being dragged back from this to "theses on principles." This is more like a "reactionary" movement than "trade unionism."

To proceed further. The third point is bonuses. This is the role and task of the trade unions in production—to distribute bonuses *in kind*. This has been started. We have begun to move in this. Five hundred thousand poods of grain have been allocated for this purpose, and one hundred and seventy thousand poods have already been distributed. Whether the grain has been distributed properly or not I cannot say. It was stated on the Council of People's Commissars that it was not being distributed properly, that the bonus

was being transformed into supplementary wages. This was also pointed out by the officials of the trade unions and of the Commissariat for Labour. We appointed a commission to inquire into this, but it has not yet finished its labours. One hundred and seventy thousand poods of grain have been distributed; but this grain must be distributed in such a way as to reward those who have displayed heroism, zeal, talent and loyalty as business managers, in short the qualities which Trotsky extols. Now, however, it is not a matter of extolling these qualities in theses, but of providing bread and meat. Would it not be better to take, say, meat from such-and-such a category of workers and give it in the form of a bonus to "urgent" workers? We do not repudiate such preference. Such preference is necessary. We shall carefully study our practical experience in applying preference.

Fourthly, disciplinary courts. I hope Comrade Bukharin will not be offended when I say that the role of the trade unions in production, "industrial democracy," are utter nonsense unless we have disciplinary courts. But you have nothing about this in your theses. Thus, from the point of view of principle, of theory and of practice, all we can say about Trotsky's theses and Bukharin's position is—Relieve me of this affliction!

And I become more convinced of the correctness of this conclusion when I say to myself: You are not presenting this question in a Marxian way. Not only do the theses contain a number of theoretical errors; the approach to the appraisal of the "role and tasks of the trade unions" is un-Marxian because one must not approach a wide subject like this without pondering over the special features of the present situation from the political aspect. It was not for nothing that Comrade Bukharin and I wrote in the trade union resolution of the Ninth Congress of the Russian Communist Party that politics are the most concentrated expression of economics.

In analysing the present political situation we could say that we are passing through a transition period within the transition period. The whole of the dictatorship of the proletariat is a transition period, but at the present time we have, so to speak, a heap of new transition periods: the demobilisation of the army, the end

of the war, the possibility of a much longer peaceful respite than we had before. a firmer transition from the war front to the labour front. This, this alone, is enough to cause a change in the relations between the proletarian class and the peasant class. What change? This must be carefully examined, but it does not follow from your theses. And until we have examined it we must be able to wait. The people are weary, stocks of food that should have been used in certain urgent industries have already been consumed; the relations between the proletariat and the peasantry are changing. War-weariness is enormous, needs have increased, but production has not increased, or has not increased sufficiently. On the other hand, as I pointed out even in my report at the Eighth Congress of Soviets, we were able to apply coercion correctly and successfully when we were able to create a basis of conviction for it.¹ I must say that Trotsky and Bukharin have utterly failed to take this very important consideration into account.

Have we laid a sufficiently broad and firm basis of conviction for all the new production tasks? No. We have just barely begun. The masses have not yet been drawn in. Can the masses take up these new tasks at once? No, they cannot, because the question, say, of whether Wrangel the landlord should be overthrown, whether any sacrifices should be stinted for this purpose, does not require special propaganda; but the question of the role of the trade unions in production, that is, if we have in mind not a question of "principle," not arguments about "Soviet trade unionism" and similar nonsense, but the practical aspect of the question, is one which we have only just begun to examine; we have only just created institutions for production propaganda, and we have no experience yet. We have introduced the payment of bonuses in kind, but we have no experience as yet of how it is working. We have created disciplinary courts, but we do not yet know what the results are. From the political point of view it is the preparation of the masses that is the most important. Is the question prepared, has it

¹ Cf. "Report on the Activities of the Council of People's Commissars at the Eighth Congress of Soviets, December 22, 1920," in *Selected Works*, Vol. VIII.—Ed.

been studied, thought out, weighed from this aspect? No, far from it. Here lies the fundamental, profound and dangerous political mistake, because on this question more than on any other must we act according to the rule "Measure your cloth seven times before you cut." Instead of that, some have begun to cut before even measuring once. Some say: "The Party must choose between two trends," but they have not measured even once; moreover, they have invented the false slogan of "industrial democracy."

We must understand the significance of this slogan, particularly in the present political situation, when bureaucracy is confronting the masses in a form they can understand, and when we have put the question of bureaucracy on the agenda. Comrade Trotsky said in his theses that all the congress has to do on the question of workers' democracy is "only to unanimously place on record." This is not true. It is not sufficient to place on record; to place on record means registering what has been fully weighed and measured; but the question of industrial democracy is far from having been fully weighed, tried and tested. Just think what interpretation the masses will put on the slogan of "industrial democracy." They will say:

"We, the ordinary rank and file, the masses, say that we must renovate, we must correct, we must expel the bureaucrats; but you pitch us a yarn about engaging in production, displaying democracy in the successes of production. I do not want to engage in production in conjunction with such a bureaucratic board of directors, chief committee, etc., but with another kind." You have not given the masses a chance to talk, to grasp the thing, to ponder over it, you have not given the Party time to acquire new experience, you are in a hurry, you overdo things, create formulæ which are theoretically false. And how much will overzealous executives magnify this mistake? A political leader is not only responsible for the way he leads but also for what is done by those he leads. Sometimes he does not know that, often he does not want that, but he is responsible all the same.

I come now to the November (November 9) and December (December 7) plenums of the Central Committee, which expressed

these mistakes no longer as logical analyses, premises and theoretical arguments, but in action. The result was a hodge-podge and confusion on the Central Committee; this is the first time anything like it has occurred in the history of our Party since the revolution, and it is dangerous. The main point is that we got a division: a "buffer" group arose consisting of Bukharin, Preobrazhensky and Serebryakov, which did more harm and created more confusion than all the others.

Recall the history of the Political Department of the People's Commissariat for Ways and Communications and of the Cectran. The resolution of the Ninth Congress of the Russian Communist Party held in April 1920 declared that a Political Department of the People's Commissariat for Ways and Communications was to be formed as a "temporary" institution, and that it was necessary to go back to normal conditions "*as speedily as possible.*" In September you read, "Go back to normal conditions."¹

In November (November 9) the plenum meets and Trotsky submits his theses, his arguments about trade unionism. However good some of his phrases about production propaganda may have been, we should have said that all this was entirely beside the mark, not to the point, that it was a step backward, and that the Central Committee ought not to deal with this subject then. Bukharin says, "Very good." Perhaps it is very good, but it is not a reply to the question. After a heated debate a resolution is adopted by ten votes against four which says in a polite and comradely way that the Cectran itself "has already placed on the order of the day" "the strengthening and development of methods of proletarian democracy in the union." It says further that the Cectran must "take an active part in the general work of the All-Russian Central Council

¹ Cf. "Izvestiya of the C.C. of the R.C.P.," No. 26, p. 2, Resolution of the September plenum of the C.C., point 3: "The C.C. further assumes that the serious situation in the transport workers' unions which called into being the Political Department of the People's Commissariat for Ways and Communications and the Political Department of Water Transport—temporary levers for assisting and organising the work—has now greatly improved. Hence it is now possible and necessary to begin incorporating these organisations in the unions as trade union bodies which are to be adapted to and absorbed by the trade union apparatus."

of Trade Unions and be represented on it on an equal footing with other trade union bodies."

What is the fundamental idea underlying the decision of the Central Committee? It is clear: "Comrades of the Cectran, carry out the decisions of the congress and of the Central Committee, not in a formal way, but actually, so that your work may assist all the unions, so that no trace of bureaucracy, preference, conceit, 'I - am - better - than - you,' 'richer - than - you,' 'we - get - more - assistance - than - you' sort of thing shall be left."

After this we pass to practical work. A commission is set up, the names of the members are published. Trotsky resigns from the commission, disrupts it, refuses to work. Why? Only one reason is given: Lutovinov sometimes plays at opposition. It is true Ossinsky does so as well. To speak quite frankly, this is not a pleasant game. But is that an argument? Ossinsky carried out the seed campaign excellently. Trotsky should have worked with him in spite of his "opposition campaign"; and methods like disrupting a commission are bureaucratic, non-Soviet, non-Socialist, incorrect and politically harmful. At a time when it is necessary to separate the sound from the unsound in the "opposition," such methods are trebly incorrect and politically harmful. When Ossinsky wages an "opposition campaign," I say to him, "This campaign is harmful." But when he carries out a seed campaign, you want to lick your fingers. I will not deny that Lutovinov is mistaken in his "opposition campaign," as are Ishchenko and Shlyapnikov, but that is no reason for disrupting a commission.

What did the commission signify? It signified the transition from intellectual talk about meaningless disagreements to practical work. Production propaganda, bonuses, disciplinary courts—this is what should have been discussed, and this is what the commission should have dealt with. Comrade Bukharin, the head of the "buffer group," and Preobrazhensky and Serebryakov, seeing a dangerous divergence on the Central Committee, set to work to form a buffer, such a buffer that I can hardly find a parliamentary expression to describe it. If I could draw cartoons as well as Comrade Bukharin, I would draw a picture of him pouring kerosene on the fire and

underneath I would write: "Buffer kerosene." Comrade Bukharin wanted to create something; there is not the slightest doubt that his intentions were most sincere, "buffer" intentions. But no buffer came of it. What came of it was that he failed to take the political situation into account, and in addition he committed mistakes in theory.

Should all these disputes have been brought out in a wide discussion? Was it worth while dealing with these idle matters? Was it worth while taking up with these matters the weeks that we require so much before the Party congress? We could have used the time to analyse and study the questions of bonuses, disciplinary courts and coalescence. We could have settled all these questions in a practical manner on the commission of the Central Committee. If Comrade Bukharin wanted to create a buffer and did not want to find himself in the position of the man who "went to one room and found himself in another," he should have demanded and insisted that Comrade Trotsky remain on the commission. Had he done that, we would have got onto the practical road and we would have ascertained on the commission what individual management, democracy, appointees, etc., really are.

To proceed. In December (the plenum of December 7) we already had the flare-up with the water transport workers, which caused the conflict to become more acute, and as a result the voting on the Central Committee was eight against our seven. Comrade Bukharin hurriedly wrote the "theoretical" part of the resolution of the December plenum, tried to "reconcile" and to use his "buffer"; of course, after the disruption of the commission, nothing could come of it.

We must remember that a political leader is responsible not only for his policy, but also for what is done by those he leads.

What was the mistake the Political Department of the Commissariat for Ways and Communications and the Cectran committed? It was not that they applied coercion; on the contrary, that is to their credit. The mistake they made was that they failed in time, and without conflicts, to proceed, in accordance with the demands of the Ninth Congress of the R.C.P., to normal trade union

work, that they failed to adapt themselves properly to the trade unions, failed to help them and to put themselves on an equal footing with them. There is valuable military experience: heroism, zeal, etc. There is the bad experience of the worst elements of the military: bureaucracy and conceit. Notwithstanding Trotsky's intentions, his theses were found to support not the best but the worst in military experience. We must remember that a political leader is responsible not only for his policy but also for what is done by those he leads.

The last thing I want to tell you, and what yesterday I had to call myself a fool for, is that I overlooked Comrade Rudzutak's theses. Rudzutak suffers from the fact that he is unable to talk loudly, impressively and eloquently. He is liable to be overlooked. Unable to attend the meeting yesterday, I glanced through my material and found among it a printed leaflet issued in connection with the Fifth All-Russian Conference of Trade Unions, which was held November 2-6, 1920. This leaflet bears the heading: "The Tasks of the Trade Unions in Production." I will read to you the whole of this leaflet. It is not long.

"FIFTH ALL-RUSSIAN CONFERENCE OF TRADE UNIONS

THE TASKS OF THE TRADE UNIONS IN PRODUCTION

(Theses of Comrade Rudzutak's Report)

"1) Immediately after the October Revolution the trade unions proved to be *almost the only* bodies which, in addition to carrying out workers' control, could and had to undertake the work of organising and *managing production*. A state apparatus for managing the national economy of the country had not yet been organised in the first period of existence of the Soviet government, and the sabotage of the factory owners and the higher technical personnel very acutely raised before the working class the task of preserving industry and of restoring the normal functioning of the whole economic apparatus of the country.

"2) In the subsequent period in the work of the Supreme Council of National Economy, when a considerable part of this work consisted in liquidating the private enterprises and organising the state management of these enterprises, the *trade unions carried on this work side by side and jointly with the state economic management bodies*.

"The weakness of the state bodies not only explained but also justified this *duplication*; historically it was justified by the establishment of full contact between the trade union and the economic management bodies.

"3) The management of the state economic bodies, their gradual mastery

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of the apparatus of production and management and the co-ordination of the various parts of this apparatus—all *shifted the centre of gravity of the work of managing industry* and of drawing up a production programme *to these bodies*. As a result the work of the trade unions in the sphere of organising production was reduced to *participation in the work of forming the collegiums* of the Chief Committees, Central Boards and factory managements.

"4) At the present time we are once again squarely faced with the question of establishing the closest ties between the economic bodies of the Soviet Republic and the trade unions; it is necessary at all costs to make expedient use of every unit of labour and to enlist the masses of producers as a whole for the purpose of taking a conscious part in the process of production; the state apparatus of economic management, gradually growing and becoming more complicated, has become transformed into a huge bureaucratic machine out of all proportion to the size of industry, and is compelling the trade unions to take a direct part in the organisation of production not only through the persons representing them on the economic bodies, but as organisations.

"5) While the Supreme Council of National Economy approaches the question of drawing up a general production programme from the point of view of the *availability of the material elements of production* (raw materials, fuel, the condition of machinery, etc.), the trade unions must approach this question *from the point of view of organising labour* for the tasks of production, and of the expedient utilisation of this labour. Therefore it must be an absolute rule that the *general production programme, in its various parts and as a whole, be drawn up with the direct co-operation of the trade unions* in order that the utilisation of the material resources of production and of labour may be combined in the most expedient manner.

"6) The introduction of genuine labour discipline, the successful combating of labour desertion, etc., are conceivable only if the whole mass of participants in production take a *conscious part* in the fulfilment of these tasks. This cannot be achieved by *bureaucratic methods and orders from above*; every participant in production must understand the need for and expediency of the production tasks he is carrying out; every participant in production must not only take part in the fulfilment of tasks given from above but also take an intelligent part in remedying all technical and organisational defects in the sphere of production.

"The tasks of the trade unions in this sphere are enormous. They must teach *their members in every shop, in every factory, to note and take into account all defects in the utilisation of labour power that result from the improper utilisation of technical resources or from unsatisfactory administration*. The *sum total of the experience of the individual enterprises and of every industry* must be utilised in a determined struggle against red tape, laxity and bureaucracy.

"7) In order to especially emphasise the importance of these production tasks they must organisationally occupy a definite place in definite current work. In developing their work; the *economic departments of the trade unions* organised in accordance with the decision of the Third All-Union Congress must gradually clarify and define the character of the whole of trade union work. For example, under present social conditions, when the whole of pro-

duction is directed towards satisfying the needs of the toilers themselves, *wage rates and bonuses should be closely connected with and dependent upon the degree of fulfilment of the production plan*. Bonuses in kind and the partial payment of wages in kind must be gradually transformed into a *system of supplying the workers* in accordance with the degree of productivity of labour.

"8) The organisation of the work of the trade unions on these lines should, on the one hand, put an end to the existence of *parallel bodies (political departments, etc.)*, and, on the other hand, should restore close contacts between the masses and the economic management bodies.

"9) After the Third Congress, the trade unions failed in a large measure to carry out their programme of participating in the work of building up national economy owing to *wartime conditions*, on the one hand, and owing to their *organisational weakness* and their isolation from the leading and practical work of the economic bodies, on the other.

"10) In view of this, the trade unions must set themselves the following immediate practical tasks: a) to take a most active part in solving the problems of production and management; b) to take a direct part jointly with the corresponding economic bodies in *organising competent management bodies*; c) to carefully register various *types of management bodies* and their influence on production; d) unfailingly to take part in drafting and laying down economic *plans* and production programmes; e) to *organise labour* in accordance with the degree of urgency of economic tasks; f) to build an extensive organisation for *production agitation and propaganda*.

"11) The economic departments of *trade unions* and trade union organisations must be transformed into swift and powerful levers for the systematic participation of the unions in the organisation of production.

"12) In the sphere of planned material supplies for the workers, the trade unions must shift their *influence to the distributing bodies of the Commissariat for Food Supplies*, both local and central; they must take a practical and businesslike part in the work of and *control* all the distributing bodies, and pay particular attention to the activities of the central and gubernia *workers' supply commissions*.

"13) In view of the fact that, owing to the narrow departmental strivings of certain chief committees, central boards, etc., so-called 'preference' has dropped into a state of confusion, the trade unions must everywhere become the champions of genuine preference in industry and of revising the prevailing system of defining preference to correspond with the importance of the industries and the material resources available in the country.

"14) Special attention must be paid to the so-called exemplary group of factories in order to transform them into genuine exemplary groups by creating competent management and labour discipline and stimulating the work of the trade union organisations.

"15) In organising labour, in addition to drawing up regular wage rates and thoroughly overhauling rates of output, the trade unions must firmly take into their own hands the whole work of combating the various *forms of labour desertion* (absenteeism, late-coming, etc.). The disciplinary courts, to which insufficient attention has been paid up to now, must be transformed into a genuine means of combating violation of proletarian labour discipline.

"16) The fulfilment of the tasks enumerated, as well as the drafting

of a practical plan of production propaganda and a number of measures for improving the economic conditions of the workers, should be imposed upon the economic departments. Therefore it is necessary to instruct the economic department of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions to convene in the near future a *special all-Russian conference of economic departments* to discuss practical questions of economic construction in connection with the work of the state economic bodies."

I hope you will now see why I had to call myself a fool. This is a platform! It is a hundred times better than the one Trotsky wrote after thinking it over many times, and better than the one Bukharin wrote (the resolution of the plenum of December 7) without thinking at all. All of us members of the Central Committee who have not worked in the trade union movement for many years should learn from Comrade Rudzutak, and Comrades Trotsky and Bukharin should learn from him. The trade unions have adopted this platform.

We all forgot about the disciplinary courts; and "industrial democracy" without bonuses in kind and disciplinary courts is just empty talk.

I shall compare Rudzutak's theses with the theses Trotsky submitted to the Central Committee. At the end of thesis 5 I read:

"It is necessary immediately to proceed to reorganise the trade unions, i.e., first of all to select the leading personnel from this point of view."

This is a perfect example of bureaucracy! Trotsky and Krestinsky will select the "leading personnel" of the trade unions!

Once again: here you have an explanation of the mistake committed by the Cectran. Its mistake was not that it exercised pressure; that is to its credit. Its mistake was that it was unable to approach the common tasks of all the trade unions, it was unable itself, and unable to assist the trade unions, to adopt more correct, swift and successful methods of utilising the comrades' disciplinary courts. When I read about the disciplinary courts in Comrade Rudzutak's theses I thought to myself: There must be a decree on this already. And it turned out that there was such a decree: "Regulations Governing Workers' Disciplinary Comrades' Courts," issued November 14, 1919 (Code of Laws No. 537).

In these courts the trade unions play the most important role.

I do not know whether these courts are good, whether they are operating successfully, or whether they always function. The study of our own practical experience would have been a million times more useful than all Comrades Trotsky and Bukharin have written.

I now conclude. Summing up all that we know about this question, I must say that it was a great mistake to bring these disagreements out in a broad Party discussion and at a Party congress. It was a political mistake. On the commission, and only on the commission, we would have had a businesslike discussion and would have made progress; but now we are going back, and we shall be going back for several weeks, to abstract theoretical propositions instead of taking a businesslike approach to the problem. As far as I am concerned, I am bored to death with it; it would give me the greatest pleasure to get away from it, quite apart from my illness; I would like to go anywhere to escape from it.

To sum up: the theses of Trotsky and Bukharin contain a number of theoretical errors, a number of things that are wrong in principle. Politically, the whole approach to the subject is sheer tactlessness. Comrade Trotsky's "theses" are politically harmful. Taken as a whole, his policy is one of bureaucratically nagging the trade unions. And I am sure our Party congress will condemn and reject this policy.

THE PARTY CRISIS

THE pre-congress discussion has already unfolded widely enough. Minor differences and disagreements have grown into big ones, as always happens if minor mistakes are persisted in and every effort is made to resist correction, or if those who make big mistakes clutch at the minor mistakes made by one person, or a few persons.

That is how disagreements and splits always grow. That is how we "grew up" from minor disagreements to syndicalism, which means complete rupture with Communism and an inevitable split in the Party if the Party does not prove to be sufficiently sound and strong to heal itself of the sickness quickly and thoroughly.

We must have the courage to look the bitter truth straight in the face. The Party is sick. The Party is shaking with fever. The whole question is: Has the sickness affected only the "feverish higher ranks," and perhaps only the Moscow higher ranks, or has it affected the whole body? And if the latter is the case, is that body able within the next few weeks (up to the Party congress and at the Party congress) to completely heal itself and make a relapse impossible, or will the illness become a long and dangerous one?

What must be done to achieve the most rapid and surest cure? *All* members of the Party must with absolute coolness and the greatest care *study* 1) the essence of the disagreements and 2) the development of the struggle within the Party. Both the one and the other must be done, because the essence of the disagreements unfolds, is explained and becomes concrete (and often undergoes transformation) *in the course of the struggle*, which in passing through various stages does *not* always and at every stage reveal the same combatants, the same numbers of combatants, the same posi-

tions in the struggle, etc. Both the one and the other must be *studied*, and we must unfailingly demand very exact, printed documents capable of being verified from all sides. Whoever merely believes what is said is a hopeless idiot whom one can only give up in disgust. If *no* documents are available, witnesses on *both* or several sides must be examined, and it must be "examination under ordeal," examination before witnesses.

I will try to draw up a synopsis of what I understand to be the essence of the disagreements as well as of the successive stages in the struggle.

First stage. The Fifth All-Russian Conference of Trade Unions, November 2-6. The battle is joined. The only "combatants" among the members of the Central Committee are Trotsky and Tomsy. Trotsky utters the "winged word" about "shaking up" the trade unions. Tomsy argues very heatedly. The majority of the members of the Central Committee are noncommittal. The serious mistake they (and I above all) made was that we "overlooked" Rudzutak's theses "The Tasks of the Trade Unions in Production" adopted by the Fifth Conference.¹ This is the *most* important document in the *whole* controversy.

Second stage. The plenum of the Central Committee of November 9. Trotsky submits a "rough draft of theses": "The Trade Unions and Their Future Role," which advocate the "shaking up" policy *concealed*, or embellished, by arguments about the "severe crisis" in the trade unions and about new tasks and methods. Tomsy, strongly supported by Lenin, considers that it is precisely the "shaking up" that is the centre of gravity of the whole controversy in view of the irregularities and bureaucratic excesses of the Cectran. During the controversy, it is alleged, Lenin makes a number of obviously exaggerated and therefore erroneous "attacks," as a result of which a "buffer group" becomes necessary and arises, consisting of ten members of the Central Committee (the group includes Bukharin and Zinoviev, but not Trotsky or Lenin). The "buffer" resolves "not to bring the disagreements out in the broad discussion," and *cancelling Lenin's report* (to the trade unions),

¹ See the preceding speech.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

appoints Zinoviev as the reporter and instructs him to "make a businesslike and non-controversial report."

Trotsky's theses are rejected. Lenin's theses are adopted. In its final form the resolution is adopted by ten votes against four (Trotsky, Andreyev, Krestinsky and Rykov). And this resolution advocates "sound forms of the militarisation of labour," condemns the "degeneration of centralism and militarised forms of work into bureaucracy, petty tyranny, red tape, etc." The Cectran is instructed "to take a more active part in the general work of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions and to be represented on it on an equal footing with other trade union bodies."

The Central Committee sets up a trade union commission and elects Comrade Trotsky to it. Trotsky refuses to work on the commission, and this step *alone* causes Comrade Trotsky's original mistake to become magnified and later to lead to factionalism. Apart from this step, Comrade Trotsky's mistake (in submitting incorrect theses) was a very minor one, such as has been made by every member of the Central Committee without exception.

Third stage. The conflict between the water transport workers and the Cectran in December. The plenum of the Central Committee of December 7. The chief "combatants" are no longer Trotsky and Lenin, but Trotsky and Zinoviev. As chairman of the trade union commission, Zinoviev inquires into the dispute between the water transport workers and the Cectran in December. The plenum of the Central Committee of December 7. Zinoviev makes a practical proposal immediately to change the composition of the Cectran. The majority of the Central Committee oppose this. Rykov goes over to Zinoviev's side. Bukharin's resolution—the practical part of which is three-quarters in favour of the water transport workers, while the preamble, rejecting the proposal to "reconstruct" the trade unions "from above" (point 3), approves of the notorious "industrial democracy" (point 5)—is adopted. Our group of Central Committee members is in the minority, being opposed to Bukharin's resolution mainly because it regards the "buffer" as a paper buffer; for Trotsky's non-participation in the work of the

trade union commission actually implies the continuation of the struggle and carrying it beyond the confines of the Central Committee. We propose that the Party congress be convened on February 6, 1921. Adopted. The postponement to March 6 was agreed to later, on the demand of the remote districts.

Fourth stage. The Eighth Congress of Soviets. On December 25 Trotsky issues his "pamphlet-platform," *The Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions*. From the point of view of formal democracy, Trotsky had an absolute right to issue his platform, for on December 24 the Central Committee permitted free discussion. From the point of view of revolutionary expediency, it was a mistake greatly magnified, it was the *creation of a faction* on an erroneous platform. The pamphlet quotes from the resolution of the Central Committee of December 7 only that part which refers to "industrial democracy" and does *not* quote what was said in opposition to "reconstruction from above." The buffer created by Bukharin on December 7 with the aid of Trotsky is smashed by Trotsky on December 25. The whole contents of the pamphlet from beginning to end are thoroughly permeated with the "shaking up" spirit. The pamphlet *fails* to indicate any "new" "tasks and methods" that were to embellish or conceal or justify "shaking up," if we leave out of account the intellectual trick words ("production atmosphere," "industrial democracy"), which are wrong in theory and the practical part of which comes into the concept, the tasks and the limits of production propaganda.

Fifth stage. The discussion before thousands of responsible Party workers from all over Russia at the R.C.P. fraction of the Eighth Congress of Soviets on December 30. The controversy is unfolded to the utmost. Zinoviev and Lenin on one side, Trotsky and Bukharin on the other. Bukharin wants to "buffer," but he speaks only in opposition to Lenin and Zinoviev, not a word in opposition to Trotsky. Bukharin reads a fragment of his theses (published on January 16), but *only* the fragment which contains not a word about the rupture with Communism and the transition to syndicalism. Shlyapnikov (in the name of the "Workers' Opposition") reads the syndicalist platform, which Trotsky had already

smashed to atoms before (thesis 16 of his platform) and which (partly, perhaps, for this reason) no one takes seriously.

In my opinion, the climax of the whole discussion of December 30 was the reading of Comrade Rudzutak's theses. Indeed, not only did Trotsky and Bukharin have no word to say in opposition to them; they even invented the legend that the "best half" of these theses were drawn up by *members of the Cectran*—Holtzmann, Andreyev and Lyubimov. And that is why Trotsky humorously and amiably twitted Lenin for his unsuccessful "diplomacy," by which, he said, Lenin wanted to "call off, disrupt" the discussion, sought a "lightning conductor" and "accidentally caught hold of, not a lightning conductor, but the Cectran."

The legend was refuted that very day, December 30, by Rudzutak, who pointed out that Lyubimov "did not exist" on the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions, that on the presidium of the A.C.C.T.U., Holtzmann voted against these theses, and that these were drawn up by a commission consisting of Andreyev, Tsiperovich and himself.

But let us assume for a moment that the legend invented by Trotsky and Bukharin is true; nothing smashes them to atoms to such a degree as this assumption; for, if "members of the Cectran" carried their "new" ideas into Rudzutak's resolution, if Rudzutak accepted them, if all the trade unions adopted this resolution (November 2-6!!), if Bukharin and Trotsky can bring no argument in opposition to it, what follows from this?

What follows is that all Trotsky's disagreements are an invention, that neither he nor the "members of the Cectran" have *any* "new tasks and methods," and that all that is practical and material to the subject was said, adopted and *decided upon* by the trade unions, and moreover, *even before the question was raised on the Central Committee.*

If anyone ought to be taken thoroughly to task and "shaken up," it is not the A.C.C.T.U. but the Central Committee of the R.C.P. for having "overlooked" Rudzutak's theses, and, owing to this mistake, allowed a useless discussion to flare up. The mistake of the members of the Cectran (which is not a serious one in essence, a very usual

one, consisting of a slight excess of bureaucracy) cannot be *concealed*. Nor need it be concealed, embellished or justified; it should be rectified. That is all.

I summed up the substance of Rudzutak's theses on December 30 in four points: 1) Ordinary democracy (without any exaggerations, without denying the right of the Central Committee to "appoint," etc., but also without the obstinate defence of the mistakes and extremes of certain "appointees," which have to be rectified). 2) Production propaganda (this includes all that is practical in the clumsy, ridiculous, theoretically wrong "formulæ" like "industrial democracy," "production atmosphere," etc.). We have established a *Soviet institution*, viz., the All-Russian Bureau of Production Propaganda. We must do everything to support it and not spoil productive work by *producing . . . bad theses*. That is all. 3) Bonuses in kind; and 4) Disciplinary comrades' courts. Without points 3 and 4, all talk about "the role and tasks in production," etc., is empty, intellectual chatter; and in Trotsky's "pamphlet-platform" both these points are forgotten. They are, however, contained in Rudzutak's theses.

In speaking of the discussion of December 30, I must correct another mistake I made. I said: "Our state is not really a workers' state, but a workers' and peasants' state."¹ Comrade Bukharin immediately exclaimed: "What kind of state?" And in reply I referred him to the Eighth Congress of Soviets, which had just closed. Reading the report of that discussion now, I realise that I was wrong and Comrade Bukharin was right. I should have said: "A workers' state is an abstraction. Actually we have a workers' state; with this peculiarity, firstly, that it is not the working class population that predominates in the country, but the peasant population; and, secondly, it is a workers' state with bureaucratic distortions." Anyone who reads the whole of my speech will see that this correction does not affect my argument or my conclusions.

Sixth stage. The Petrograd organisation issues an "Appeal to the Party" against Trotsky's platform, and the Moscow Committee issues its counter-statement (*Pravda*, January 13).

¹ See p. 9 in this volume.—*Ed.*

The transition from the struggle between factions formed from above to the intervention of the lower organisations. A big step towards recovery. Curiously enough, the Moscow Committee noted the "dangerous" side of the Petrograd *organisation* issuing a platform, but did not want to note the *dangerous side* of Comrade Trotsky forming a faction on December 25!!! Jesters call such blindness (one-eyed) "buffer blindness." . . .

Seventh stage. The trade union commission concludes its work and issues a platform (a pamphlet entitled *Draft Decision of the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P. on the Question of the Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions*, dated January 14 and signed by nine members of the Central Committee—Zinoviev, Stalin, Tomsy, Rudzutak, Kalinin, Kamenev, Petrovsky, Artem and Lenin, and by Lozovsky, a member of the trade union commission; evidently Shlyapnikov and Lutovinov "fled" to the "Workers' Opposition"). The platform was published in *Pravda* on January 18, and, in addition to those mentioned, the following signatures were appended: Schmidt, Tsiperovich and Milyutin.

On January 16 the Bukharin platform appears in *Pravda* (signed "On behalf of a group of comrades, Bukharin, Larin, Preobrazhensky, Serebryakov, Sokolnikov, Yakovleva"), and also the Sapronov platform (signed "A group of comrades standing on the platform of democratic centralism—Bubnov, Boguslavsky, Kamensky, Maximovsky, Ossinsky, Raphael, Sapronov"). At the enlarged meeting of the Moscow Committee on January 17, representatives of these platforms spoke, as also did the "Ignatovists" (theses published in *Pravda* on January 19 signed by Ignatov, Orekhov, Korzinov, Kuranova, Burovtsev, Maslov).¹

We see here, on the one hand, increased solidarity (for the platform of the nine members of the Central Committee is fully in agreement with the decision of the Fifth All-Russian Conference of Trade Unions); and on the other hand we see confusion and disin-

¹ Incidentally, the Party should demand that every platform be issued with the signatures of all the comrades responsible for it. The "Ignatovists" and "Sapronovists" satisfy this demand, but the "Trotskyists," "Bukharinists" and "Shlyapnikovists" do not; they fail to give the names of the comrades who they allege are responsible for their platforms.

tegration. And the theses of Bukharin and Co. are the acme of *ideological* disintegration. Here one of those "turns" was taken about which Marxists in the old days used to say in jest: "A turn that is not so much historical as hysterical." In thesis 17 we read: "At the present time these nominations must be made *compulsory*" (*viz.*, the trade unions' nominations for the corresponding "Chief Committees and Central Boards").

This is a complete rupture with Communism and transition to the position of syndicalism. In essence, it is a repetition of Shlyapnikov's slogan "Unionise the state"; it means transferring the apparatus of the Supreme Council of National Economy piece-meal to the corresponding trade unions. To say, "I propose *compulsory* nominations" is exactly the same as saying, "I appoint."

Communism says: The vanguard of the proletariat, the Communist Party, leads the non-Party masses of the workers, educates, prepares, teaches and trains the masses (the "school" of Communism), first the workers and then the peasants, in order that they may eventually concentrate in their hands the entire management of the whole of national economy.

Syndicalism transfers to the masses of non-Party workers, who are divided according to industry, the management of branches of industry (the "Chief Committees and Central Boards"), thus destroying the need for the Party, and without carrying on prolonged work either in training the masses or in *actually* concentrating in *their* hands the management of *the whole of national economy*.

The programme of the R.C.P. reads: "The trade unions . . . *must* eventually" (hence, not now, and not even in the immediate future) "actually concentrate in their hands" (in *their*, *i.e.*, the hands of the trade unions, *i.e.*, the hands of the entirely organised *masses*; everyone can see how far we still are from even the very first approach to this *actual* concentration; concentration of what?) "the entire management of the whole of national economy as a single economic unit" (hence, not branches of industry, and not industry, but industry *plus* agriculture, etc. Are we near to the actual concentration of the management of agriculture in the hands of the trade unions?).

And the next sentences of the programme of the R.C.P. speak of the "ties" between the "central state administration" and the "broad masses of the toilers," and of the "*participation* of the trade unions in the management of economy."

If the trade unions, nine-tenths of the members of which are non-Party workers, appoint ("compulsory nomination") the managers of industry, what is the use of the Party? What Bukharin said, logically, theoretically and practically implies a split in the Party, or, rather, a split between the syndicalists and the Party.

Up to now Trotsky was the "chief" in the struggle. Now Bukharin has far "outstripped" Trotsky and has fully "eclipsed" him; he has created quite a new relationship in the struggle, for the mistake he has dropped into is a hundred times more serious than all Trotsky's mistakes put together.

How could Bukharin go so far as to drop into this rupture with Communism? We know how soft Bukharin is; it is one of the qualities we all love him and cannot help loving him for. We know that more than once he was called in jest "soft wax." It turns out that any "unprincipled" person, any "demagogue" can make any impression he likes on this "soft wax." The sharp expressions put in quotation marks were employed by Comrade Kamenev, and he had a right to do so, in the course of the discussion on January 17; but, of course, it would not enter the head of either Kamenev or anyone else to attribute all that has taken place to unprincipled *demagogy*, to reduce it all to that.

On the contrary. There is an objective logic in factional struggles which inevitably leads even the best of people—if they persist in occupying a wrong position—to a position which actually differs in no way from unprincipled demagogy. This is what the whole history of factional wars teaches (for example, the amalgamation of the "*Vperyod*-ists" with the Mensheviks against the Bolsheviks).¹ This is precisely why we must study, not only the nature of the disagreements in the abstract, but also the concrete manner in which they unfolded and changed in the development of the various

¹ Cf. "Notes of a Publicist," *Selected Works*, Vol. IV.—Ed. Eng. ed.

stages of the struggle. The discussion of January 17 summed up this development. We can no longer advocate either "shaking up" or "new production tasks" (because all that is businesslike and practical has gone into Rudzutak's theses). All that we can do is either to find what Lassalle called "the physical strength of mind" (and character) to admit a mistake, rectify it and turn over the present page of the history of the R.C.P., or . . . clutch at the allies still remaining, no matter who they are, "without noticing" principles. The only allies that are left are the adherents of "democracy" to *insensibility*. And Bukharin is slipping towards them, slipping towards syndicalism.

While we are gradually absorbing what was sound in the "democratic" "Workers' Opposition," Bukharin has to clutch at what is *unsound*. On January 17 Comrade Bumazhny, a prominent Cectranist, or Trotskyist, expressed his readiness to accept Bukharin's syndicalist proposals. The "Sapronovists" went so far as to argue in the same thesis (thesis 3) about "the profound crisis" and the "bureaucratic paralysis" of the trade unions, and to propose at the same time, as being "absolutely" necessary, the "extension of the rights of the trade unions in production" . . . probably owing to their "bureaucratic paralysis." Can this group be taken seriously? They heard some talk about the *role* of the trade unions in production, and in order to shout louder than anyone else, blurted out: "Extension of rights" owing to their "bureaucratic paralysis." It is enough to read the first few lines of their "practical" proposals: "The presidium of the Supreme Council of National Economy shall be nominated by the A.C.C.T.U. and finally endorsed by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee," not to want to read any more. And what is their *democratic* position in "principle"? Listen (thesis 2): "They (Zinoviev and Trotsky) in fact express two trends within the same group of *ex-militarisers of economy*"!!

If we are to take this seriously we must say that this is the worst sort of Menshevism and Socialist-Revolutionarism. But Sapronov, Ossinsky and Co. cannot be taken seriously if before every Party congress ("every blessed time on this very same spot") these to my

mind very valuable workers drop into a sort of feverish paroxysm and try to shout louder than everyone else (the faction of "loudest shouters") and solemnly "put their foot into it." The "Ignatovists" follow the "Sapronovists." Of course it is quite permissible for various groups to form *blocs* (particularly before a congress; and also to chase after votes). But this should be done within the limits of Communism (and not syndicalism) and in such a way as not to call forth ridicule. Who bids more? Promisers of more "rights" to non-Party people, unite for the Party congress of the Russian Communist Party! . . .

Up to now our platform has been: Don't defend the excesses of bureaucracy, rectify them. The fight against bureaucracy is a long and arduous one. Excesses can and must be rectified at once. It is not those who point to harmful excesses and strive to rectify them that undermine the prestige of the military workers and the appointees, but those who resist this rectification. Precisely of such a nature were the excesses of certain Cectranists, who, however, will be (and have been) valuable and useful workers. The trade unions must not be nagged, and disagreements with them must not be invented when they have accepted and they themselves have decided upon all that is new, businesslike and practical on the question of the tasks of the trade unions in production. Let us set to practical work in this field intensively and in unison.

Now we have added to our platform the following: We must combat the ideological confusion and those *unsound* elements of the opposition who go to the lengths of repudiating all "militarisation of economy," of repudiating not only the "method of appointing," which has been the prevailing method up to now, but all "appointments," for in the last analysis this means repudiating the leading role of the *Party* in relation to the non-Party masses. We must combat the syndicalist deviation, which will kill the Party if it is not completely cured of it.

Undoubtedly, the capitalists of the Entente will try to take advantage of our Party's sickness to organise a new invasion; and the Socialist-Revolutionaries will take advantage of it for the pur-

pose of organising conspiracies and rebellions. But we do not fear this because we shall all unite as one man, not fearing to admit the disease, but recognising that it demands from all of us greater discipline, greater endurance, greater firmness at every post. The Party will be not weaker but stronger by the time the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P. meets in March, and after the congress.

January 19, 1921

ONCE AGAIN ON THE TRADE UNIONS, THE PRESENT SITUATION AND THE MISTAKES OF COMRADES TROTSKY AND BUKHARIN

A PARTY discussion and a factional struggle of a pre-congress character, *i.e.*, before the elections and in connection with the forthcoming election of delegates to the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P., have flared up. The first factional pronouncement, namely, Comrade Trotsky's pronouncement "in the name of a number of responsible workers" in the "pamphlet-platform" ("The Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions," preface dated December 25, 1920), was followed by the sharp (the reader will see from what follows that it was deservedly sharp) pronouncement of the Petrograd organisation of the R.C.P. ("Appeal to the Party," published in the *Petrograd Pravda* on January 6, 1921, and in the central organ of the Party, the *Moscow Pravda*, on January 13, 1921) and by a statement by the Moscow Committee in opposition to the Petrograd organisation (in the same issue of *Pravda*). Then appeared the stenographic report, published by the bureau of the R.C.P. fraction of the A.C.C.T.U., of the discussion that took place on December 30, 1920, at a very large and very responsible Party meeting, namely, the meeting of the R.C.P. fraction of the Eighth Congress of Soviets. This stenographic report bears the title "The Role of the Trade Unions in Production" (preface dated January 6, 1921). This, of course, is not all the discussion material by far. And Party meetings at which the questions in dispute are discussed are being held almost everywhere. On December 30, 1920, I spoke at a meeting under conditions in which, as I expressed it then, I "violated the rules of procedure," *i.e.*, under conditions in which I could not take part in the discussion or hear the preceding and subse-

quent speakers.¹ I will try now to restore the violated order and express myself more "in order."

THE DANGER OF FACTIONAL PRONOUNCEMENTS FOR THE PARTY

Is Comrade Trotsky's pamphlet *The Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions* a factional pronouncement? Irrespective of its contents, is there anything dangerous for the Party in a pronouncement of this kind? In addition to Comrade Trotsky, of course, the members of the Moscow Committee, who see the factionalism of the Petrograd comrades, like particularly to hush up this question, and so does Comrade Bukharin, who, however, speaking in the name of the "buffer faction" on December 30, 1920, felt obliged to state:

"When a train is showing a certain inclination towards a crash, a buffer is not at all a bad thing" (report of discussion of December 30, 1920, p. 45).

So there is a certain inclination towards a crash. Can we conceive of intelligent members of the Party being indifferent to the question of where, in what, and how, the inclination towards a crash began?

Trotsky's pamphlet starts with the statement that "it is the fruit of collective work," that "a number of responsible workers, particularly trade unionists (members of the presidium of the A.C.C. T.U., of the C.C. of the Metal Workers' Union, of the Cetrans and others)" took part in compiling it, and that it is a "pamphlet-platform." At the end of thesis 4 we read:

"The forthcoming Party congress will have to *choose*" (Trotsky's italics) "between two trends in the sphere of the trade union movement."

If this is not the formation of a faction by a member of the Central Committee, if this is not a "certain inclination towards a crash," then let Bukharin, or anyone of his adherents, explain to the Party what other meaning the Russian words "factionalism," and the Party betraying "a certain inclination towards a crash" can have. Can more monstrous blindness be imagined than the blindness of those who want to act as a "buffer" and *who close their eyes to such an "inclination towards a crash"??*

¹ See beginning of the speech on p. 3.—Ed.

Just think! After two plenums of the Central Committee (November 9 and December 7), which were devoted to an unprecedentedly detailed, long, and heated discussion of the original draft of Comrade Trotsky's theses and of the entire trade union policy that he advocates for the Party, a member of the Central Committee, *one out of nineteen*, chooses a group outside the Central Committee and advances the "collective" "work" of this group as a "platform" advising the Party congress to "choose between two trends"!! This is quite apart from the fact that Comrade Trotsky's announcement of two and only two trends on December 25, 1920, although on November 9 Comrade Bukharin had already come out as a "bufferist," glaringly exposes the true role of Bukharin's group as abettors of the worst and most harmful sort of factionalism. This in passing. But I ask any member of the Party: Is not this attack and rush upon "choosing" between two trends in the sphere of the trade union movement astonishingly headlong? Should we not shrug our shoulders in astonishment at the fact that after three years of the proletarian dictatorship even a single Party member can be found capable of "rushing at" the question of two trends in the sphere of the trade union movement *in this way*?

This is not all. Look at the factional attacks with which this pamphlet is replete. In the very first thesis we note a threatening "gesture" at "certain workers in the trade union movement" who are thrown "back to the craft unionist positions, which in principle were liquidated in the Party long ago" (evidently only one member of the C.C. out of nineteen represents the Party). Thesis 8 grandiloquently condemns "the craft conservatism prevailing among the leading stratum of the trade union workers" (note the truly bureaucratic concentration of attention on the "leading stratum"!). Thesis 11 starts with the astonishingly tactful, convincing, practical... (what is the most polite word for it?) "hint" at the "majority of the trade unionists" formally, *i.e., in words*, recognising the "resolutions of the Ninth Congress" of the Russian Communist Party.

You see what authoritative judges we have before us of whether

the *majority* (!!) of the trade unionists recognise Party decisions *in words*!

Thesis 12 reads:

"Many trade unionists are more and more sharply and irreconcilably opposing the prospect of coalescing. . . . Among these trade unionists we find Comrades Tomsky and Lozovsky. Not only that. Brushing aside new tasks and methods, many trade unionists are cultivating in their midst the spirit of corporative exclusiveness and dislike for the new workers who are being drawn into the given sphere of economy, and in this way they are practically fostering the craft survivals among the organised workers."

Let the reader carefully re-read these arguments and deeply ponder over them. They contain an astonishing wealth of "gems." First of all, appraise this pronouncement from the point of view of its factionalism! Imagine what Trotsky would have said, and how he would have said it, had Tomsky published a platform accusing Trotsky and "many" military workers of cultivating the spirit of bureaucracy, of fostering the survivals of savagery, etc. What is the "role" of Bukharin, Preobrazhensky, Serebryakov and others who fail to see—positively fail to note, utterly fail to note—sharpness and factionalism *here*, who fail to see how many times more factional this is than the pronouncement of the Petrograd comrades?

Secondly, try to understand the approach to the subject: many trade unionists are "cultivating in their midst the spirit." . . . The approach is thoroughly bureaucratic. The whole point, you see, is the "spirit" which Tomsky and Lozovsky are cultivating "in their midst," and not the level of development and conditions of life of the masses, of the millions.

Thirdly, Comrade Trotsky here accidentally expressed the *essence* of the whole controversy which he and the "buffer" Bukharin and Co. are so carefully evading and glossing over.

Does the essence of the controversy and the source of the struggle lie in the fact that many trade unionists are brushing aside new tasks and methods and cultivating in their midst a spirit of dislike for new workers? Or is it that the masses of the organised workers are legitimately protesting and inevitably expressing readiness to thrust aside these new workers who refuse to rectify the unnecessary and harmful excesses of bureaucracy?

Does the essence of the controversy lie in the fact that someone does not want to understand "new tasks and methods"? Or is it the fact that someone, by talking a lot about new tasks and methods, is clumsily concealing the defence of certain unnecessary and harmful excesses of bureaucracy?

Let the reader fix this *essence* of the whole controversy in his mind.

FORMAL DEMOCRACY AND REVOLUTIONARY EXPEDIENCY

"Workers' democracy knows no fetishes," Comrade Trotsky writes in his theses, which are "the fruit of collective work." "It knows only revolutionary expediency" (thesis 23).

Something unpleasant happened to Comrade Trotsky's theses. What is correct in them not only is not new, but turns *against* Trotsky. And what is new in them is totally wrong.

I have written out Comrade Trotsky's correct propositions. They turn against him not only on the question dealt with in thesis 23 (on the Chief Political Department of Railways), but also on other questions.

From the formal-democratic point of view Trotsky *had a right* to come out with a factional platform even against the whole of the Central Committee. This is indisputable. It is also indisputable that the Central Committee endorsed this formal right by its decision concerning freedom of discussion adopted on December 24, 1920. Buffer Bukharin recognises this formal right for Trotsky, but does not recognise it for the Petrograd organisation, probably because on December 30, 1920, Bukharin went to the length of saying, "The sacred slogan of workers' democracy" (stenographic report, p. 45).

Well, and what about revolutionary expediency?

Is there a single serious person not blinded by the factional self-esteem of the "Cectran" or of the "buffer" faction, is there a person of sound mind and judgment who can see *revolutionary expediency* in a pronouncement on questions concerning the trade union movement *such as that* made by such an authoritative leader as Trotsky??

Can it be denied that, even if the "new tasks and methods" were

indicated by Trotsky as correctly as he has in fact indicated them incorrectly (of this later), Trotsky's approach to the question would alone have caused harm to himself, to the Party, to the trade union movement, to the work of training millions of trade union members, and to the republic?

Probably the reason why good Bukharin and his group call themselves a "buffer" is that they have firmly decided *not to think* about the obligations this title imposes upon them.

THE POLITICAL DANGER OF SPLITS IN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

Everyone knows that big disagreements sometimes grow out of very small, at first even insignificant, differences. Everyone knows that an insignificant bruise, or even a scratch, which everyone has had scores of times in the course of his life, may develop into a very dangerous and sometimes even fatal disease *if* it begins to fester, *if* blood poisoning sets in. This is what happens in all, even purely personal conflicts. This is what also happens in politics.

Every difference, even an insignificant one, may become politically dangerous if it is likely to grow into a split, the kind of split which is capable of shaking and destroying the whole political edifice, which may lead, to use Comrade Bukharin's simile, to a railway crash.

Clearly, in a country which is experiencing the dictatorship of the proletariat, a split in the ranks of the proletariat, or between the proletarian party and the masses of the proletariat, is not only dangerous, but extremely dangerous, particularly if in that country the proletariat constitutes a small minority of the population. And a split in the trade union movement (which, as I tried to emphasise with all my might in my speech on December 30, 1920, is a movement of the almost completely organised proletariat) means precisely a split among the masses of the proletariat.

That is why, when the "scrap started" at the Fifth All-Russian Conference of Trade Unions, November 2-6, 1920 (and that is exactly where it started), when immediately after that conference—no, I am mistaken, *during* that conference—Comrade Tomsy ap-

peared before the Political Bureau in a high state of extraordinary excitement and, fully supported by Comrade Rudzutak, who is the calmest of men, began to relate that Comrade Trotsky at that conference had talked about "shaking up" the trade unions and that he, Tomskey, had opposed this—when this happened, I immediately and irrevocably made up my mind that the essence of the controversy was one of policy (i.e., the trade union policy of the Party) and that Comrade Trotsky was entirely wrong in his dispute with Comrade Tomskey over his policy of "shaking up" the trade unions; for, *even if it were partly justified* by the "new tasks and methods" (Trotsky's thesis 12), the policy of "shaking up" the unions at the present time and in the present situation cannot be tolerated because it threatens a split.

It now seems to Comrade Trotsky that the fact that the "shaking up from above" policy is ascribed to him is "an utter caricature" (L. Trotsky, "A Reply to the Petrograd Comrades," in *Pravda*, No. 9, January 15, 1921). But the catchword "shaking up" is a real "winged word," not only in the sense that after being uttered by Comrade Trotsky at the Fifth All-Russian Conference of Trade Unions it "flew," so to speak, all round the Party and the trade unions; no, unfortunately, it remains true even today in a much more profound sense, viz., it alone expresses, in the briefest form, *the whole spirit, the whole trend* of the pamphlet-platform entitled *The Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions*. From beginning to end the whole of Comrade Trotsky's pamphlet-platform is thoroughly permeated precisely with the spirit of the "shaking up from above" policy. It is sufficient to recall the accusation made against Comrade Tomskey, or against "many trade unionists," that they "cultivate in their midst the spirit of dislike for new workers"!

But while at the Fifth All-Russian Conference of Trade Unions (November 2-6, 1920) the atmosphere threatening a split only began to be created, in the beginning of December 1920 the split in the Cectran became a fact.

This event is the fundamental, the principal and root thing in appraising the political essence of our controversies, and Comrades Trotsky and Bukharin are mistaken if they believe that hushing this

up will help them. In this case hushing things up does not "buffer," it rouses passions, for the question has not only been brought up on the order of the day by life itself, it has been emphasised by Comrade Trotsky in his pamphlet-platform. It is precisely this pamphlet that repeatedly, in the passages I have quoted, particularly in thesis 12, raises the question: Does the essence lie in the fact that "many trade unionists cultivate in their midst the spirit of dislike for new workers," or does it lie in the fact that the "dislike" of the *masses* is legitimate in view of certain unnecessary and harmful excesses of bureaucracy, for example in the Cectran?

In the very first speech he delivered, that of December 30, 1920, Comrade Zinoviev quite properly put the question bluntly when he said that it was the "immoderate adherents of Comrade Trotsky" who had brought things to a split. Perhaps that is why Comrade Bukharin abusively described Comrade Zinoviev's speech as "spouting." But every Party member who reads the stenographic report of the discussion of December 30, 1920, will be convinced that this reproach was unjust; and he will see that it is precisely Comrade Zinoviev who quotes precise facts and bases himself on precise facts, and that it is Trotsky and Bukharin who indulge most in intellectual "verbosity" devoid of all facts.

When Comrade Zinoviev said, "The Cectran is standing on feet of clay and has already split into three parts," Comrade Sosnovsky interrupted and said, "And you encouraged it" (stenographic report, p. 15).

Now this is a serious charge. If it were proved, those who were guilty of *encouraging a split* even in one of the trade unions would, of course, find no place either in the Central Committee, or in the R.C.P., or in the trade unions in our republic. Happily, this serious charge was advanced in a frivolous manner by a comrade who, unfortunately, has more than once given examples of frivolous polemical "zeal." Comrade Sosnovsky has sometimes even spoiled his excellent articles on production propaganda, let us say, with a "spoonful of tar" which far exceeded all the benefits of the production propaganda. There are people with such happy natures (Bukharin, for example) who even in the midst of the fiercest battle

are unable to put venom in their attacks; and there are people with not very happy natures who too frequently put venom in their attacks. Comrade Sosnovsky would do well to watch himself in this respect, and even ask his friends to watch him.

But, I can say, the charge has nevertheless been made, even if in a frivolous, clumsy and obviously "factional" form. It is better to speak the truth clumsily, however, than to hush it up when serious matters are in question.

Matters are certainly serious, because, I repeat, the *crux* of the whole controversy lies here to a much greater extent than people think. Happily, we have sufficiently convincing and sufficiently objective facts at our command to be able to reply to the *essence* of the question raised by Comrade Sosnovsky.

In the first place, on this very page of the stenographic report we read the statement of Comrade Zinoviev, who not only retorted to Comrade Sosnovsky by saying "It is not true!" but definitely quoted decisive facts. Comrade Zinoviev showed that Comrade Trotsky tried to advance (and I will add that he did this in a burst of factional zeal) an accusation very different from that advanced by Comrade Sosnovsky, an accusation *that by his speech at the September All-Russian Conference of the R.C.P.* Comrade Zinoviev helped to bring about, or brought about, a split. (In parenthesis I will observe that the accusation is groundless, if only for the reason that, in essence, Comrade Zinoviev's September speech was approved by the Central Committee and the Party and that no one has ever formally protested against it.)

And Comrade Zinoviev replied that at the meeting of the Central Committee Comrade Rudzutak proved with the aid of the minutes that:

"This question" (the question of certain unnecessary and harmful excesses of bureaucracy in the Cectran) "was examined in Siberia, on the Volga, in the North and in the South, *long before* I" (Zinoviev) "made any speeches, and long before the all-Russian conference."

This is an absolutely clear and precise statement of fact. Comrade Zinoviev made it in his first speech before thousands of most responsible members of the R.C.P., and neither Comrade Trotsky, who

spoke *twice after* Zinoviev delivered this speech, nor Comrade Bukharin, *who also spoke after* Zinoviev delivered his speech, *ever refuted* the facts quoted by Zinoviev.

Secondly, a still more definite and official refutation of Comrade Sosnovsky's accusation was the *resolution of the plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.*, published in the same stenographic report, *on the dispute between the Communist members of the Water Transport Workers' Union and the Communist fraction of the Cectran conference* adopted on December 7, 1920. The part of the resolution which deals with the Cectran reads as follows:

"In connection with the dispute between the Cectran and the water transport workers, the C.C. resolves: 1) to set up a Water Transport Workers' Section in the amalgamated Cectran; 2) to convene a congress of railwaymen and water transport workers in February, at which to arrange normal elections for the new Cectran; 3) to allow the old Cectran to function until that time; 4) to immediately abolish the Chief Political Department of Water Transport and Chief Political Department of Railways and to transfer all their forces and funds to the trade union organisations on the basis of normal democracy."

From this the reader will see that not only is there no talk of condemning the water transport workers, but, on the contrary, they are recognised *to be right* in all essentials. And yet *not a single one* of the members of the Central Committee who signed the general platform of January 14, 1921, voted for this resolution (except Kamenev). (The platform referred to is "The Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions." Draft resolution for the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P. submitted to the Central Committee by a group of members of the Central Committee and members of the trade union commission. The non-member of the Central Committee but member of the trade union commission who signed it is Lozovsky. The others are Tomskey, Kalinin, Rudzutak, Zinoviev, Stalin, Lenin, Kamenev, Petrovsky and Artem Sergeyev.)

This resolution was carried *in opposition* to the members of the Central Committee enumerated above, *i.e.*, in opposition to our group, for we would have voted against allowing the old Cectran to continue functioning temporarily, and the inevitability of the victory of our group compelled Trotsky to vote for Bukharin's resolution, because otherwise our resolution would have been carried.

Comrade Rykov, who was *for* Trotsky in November, took part in the work of the trade union commission in examining the dispute between the water transport workers and the Cectran in December, and became convinced that the transport workers were right.

To sum up: the December (December 7) majority of the Central Committee consisted of Comrades Trotsky, Bukharin, Preobrazhensky, Serebryakov, and others, *i.e.*, those members of the Central Committee whom nobody can suspect of being prejudiced *against* the Cectran. And this majority, taking the substance of its resolution, condemned, not the water transport workers, but the Cectran, and merely refrained from immediately dissolving it. Hence the unsoundness of Sosnovsky's accusation is proved.

In order to leave no room for ambiguity I must deal with one other point. What were the "certain unnecessary and harmful excesses of bureaucracy" to which I have more than once referred? Has *this* not been an unsupported or exaggerated charge?

Again, the reply was made by Comrade Zinoviev in his very first speech, on December 30, 1920, and it was a reply that left nothing to be desired as far as precision is concerned. Comrade Zinoviev quoted a passage from Comrade Zoff's order on water transport issued in printed form (May 3, 1920), which contained the statement: "Committee rule is abolished." Comrade Zinoviev quite rightly described this as a fundamental error. This was a sample of the unnecessary and harmful excesses of bureaucracy and "appointment." Comrade Zinoviev immediately made the reservation that there were appointed comrades "far less tried and experienced" than Comrade Zoff. On the Central Committee I have heard Comrade Zoff appraised as a most valuable worker, and my observations on the Council of Defence fully confirm this appraisal. No one dreams of undermining the authority of such comrades, or of making "scapegoats" of them (as Comrade Trotsky hinted in his report —p. 25—without a shadow of justification). It is not those who correct the mistakes of the "appointees" who undermine their authority, but those who defend them even when they make mistakes.

Thus we see that the danger of a split in the trade union

movement was not imaginary, it was real. We also see very clearly what the unexaggerated essence of the disagreements really is: it is the struggle against defending and justifying certain unnecessary and harmful excesses of bureaucracy and appointment, and for getting them corrected. That is all.

DISAGREEMENTS ON PRINCIPLE

But we may be asked: If there are radical and profound disagreements on principle, do they not justify the sharpest and most factional pronouncements? If it is necessary to say something new and not understood, does not that sometimes justify even a split?

Of course it does, if the disagreements are really extremely profound and if the wrong direction of the policy of the Party, or of the working class, cannot be rectified in any other way.

But the unfortunate thing is that there are no such disagreements. Comrade Trotsky tried to point them out, but he could not. And if *before* the appearance of his pamphlet (December 25) it was possible—and we had to—speak in tentative or conciliatory terms (“the question cannot be approached in this way even if there are new tasks or disagreements that we are unaware of”), *after* this pamphlet appeared we had to say: What is new in Comrade Trotsky’s pamphlet is wrong in essence.

This is seen most clearly from a comparison of Comrade Trotsky’s theses with those of Rudzutak which were adopted by the Fifth All-Russian Conference of Trade Unions (November 2-6). I quoted these in my speech on December 30 and in *Pravda* of January 21.¹ These theses are more correct and fuller than Trotsky’s theses. The things that distinguish Trotsky’s theses from Rudzutak’s theses are wrong.

To begin with, let us take the notorious “industrial democracy” which Comrade Bukharin hastened to insert in the resolution of the Central Committee of December 7. Of course, it would be ridiculous to find fault with this clumsy, intellectually-artificial

¹ See theses on pp. 23-26, and also the article “The Party Crisis” in this volume.—Ed.

("tricky") term if it were employed in a speech, or in an article. But it was Trotsky and Bukharin who put themselves in the ridiculous position of *insisting in their theses* on this very term, which distinguishes their "platforms" from Rudzutak's theses that were adopted by the trade unions.

This term is theoretically wrong. All democracy, like every political superstructure in general (which is inevitable until classes have been abolished, until classless society has been created), in the last analysis serves production, and in the last analysis is determined by the production relations prevailing in the given society. That is why singling out "industrial democracy" from all other democracy is meaningless. It is confusing, and it is a squib. This is the first point.

Secondly, look at the explanation of this term given by Bukharin himself in the resolution of the plenum of the C.C. of December 7, which he drafted. In that resolution Bukharin wrote: "That is why the methods of workers' democracy should be methods of *industrial* democracy. 'This means'—note "This means"! Bukharin starts his appeal to the masses with such big words that he has to give a *special explanation* of them; in my opinion, this is *undemocratic* from the point of view of democracy; for the masses one must write without new terms that require special explanation; from the point of view of "production" it is harmful, because it causes waste of time on explaining unnecessary terms—"this means that all elections, nomination of candidates, supporting candidates, etc., must proceed not only from the point of view of political consistency, but also from the point of view of *business ability, administrative experience, organising qualities* and actually tested concern for the material and spiritual interests of the toiling masses."

The argument is obviously forced and incorrect. In the first place, democracy does not mean only "elections, nomination of candidates, supporting candidates, etc." Secondly, not all elections should proceed from the point of view of political consistency and business ability. Comrade Trotsky notwithstanding, in an organisa-

tion numbering millions it is also necessary to have a certain percentage of petitioners, bureaucrats (we shall not be able to dispense with good bureaucrats for many years to come). But we never speak of "petitioner" or "bureaucratic" democracy.

Thirdly, it is wrong to look only to the elected persons, only to the organisers, administrators, etc. These, after all, are only a minority of prominent people. We must look to the rank and file, to the masses. In Rudzutak's theses this is expressed not only more simply and intelligibly, but theoretically more correctly, as follows (thesis 6):

"Every participant in production must understand the need for and expediency of the production tasks he is carrying out; every participant in production must not only take part in the fulfilment of tasks given from above but also take an intelligent part in remedying all technical and organisational defects in the sphere of production."

Fourthly, "industrial democracy" is a term that may give rise to misinterpretation. It may be understood to repudiate dictatorship and individual management. It may be interpreted to mean suspension of ordinary democracy, or a pretext for evading it. Both these interpretations are harmful, and in order to avoid them special and long commentaries are required.

The simple enunciation of the same ideas in Rudzutak's theses is more correct and avoids all these inconveniences. And Trotsky in his article "Industrial Democracy," in *Pravda* of January 11, not only does not refute the existence of these inaccuracies and inconveniences (he evades this question altogether, he does not compare his theses with those of Rudzutak), but, on the contrary, indirectly confirms the inconvenience and inaccuracy of his term precisely by using, parallel with it, the term "war democracy." Happily, as far as I remember, we have never raised factional controversies over a term of this kind.

Still more clumsy is Trotsky's term "production atmosphere." Zinoviev quite rightly ridiculed it. Trotsky became very angry and argued: "We had a war atmosphere, a front atmosphere . . . now we must create among the masses of the workers—in the very depths of the masses, not only on the surface—a *production at-*

mosphere, i.e., the same tension, practical interest and attention to production as were displayed towards the fronts. . . . But the whole point is that we must speak to "the masses of the workers," to "their very depths," in the language of Rudzutak's theses, and not use words like "production atmosphere," which cause perplexity or raise a smile. In essence, in using the expression "production atmosphere," Comrade Trotsky expresses the very idea that is expressed by the term "production propaganda." But production propaganda must be carried on among the masses, in their very depths, in such a way as to avoid such expressions. This expression is useful as an example of how *not* to carry on production propaganda among the masses.

POLITICS AND ECONOMICS. DIALECTICS AND ECLECTICISM

It is strange that we should have to raise such an elementary, A B C question again. Unfortunately, Trotsky and Bukharin compel us to do so. Both of them reproach me for "substituting" another question for this one, or for approaching it "politically" while they approach it "economically." Bukharin even put this in his theses and tried to "rise above" both controversialists, as if to say, "I combine one with the other."

The theoretical incorrectness of this is most striking. Politics are the concentrated expression of economics, I repeated in my speech,¹ because I had already heard this totally unjustified—and from the lips of a Marxist totally impermissible—reproach about my "political" approach before. Politics cannot but have precedence over economics. To argue differently means forgetting the A B C of Marxism.

Perhaps my political appraisal is wrong? Then say so and prove it. But to say (or even indirectly to assume) that a political approach is the same as an "economic" approach, that it is possible to take "the one and the other," means forgetting the A B C of Marxism.

In other words, a political approach means that a wrong ap-

¹ See p. 17.—*Ed.*

proach to the trade unions will be fatal for the Soviet government, for the dictatorship of the proletariat. (A split between the Party and the trade unions in which the Party was in the wrong would certainly result in the overthrow of the Soviet government in a peasant country like Russia.) This argument can (and should) be tested in substance, *i.e.*, whether the given approach is correct or incorrect can be examined, investigated and settled. To say, however, "I 'value' your political approach, 'but' it is only a political approach, whereas we require 'also an economic' approach," is exactly the same as saying, "I 'value' your argument that if you take such-and-such a step you will break your neck; *but* please also weigh the argument that to be well-fed and clothed is better than being hungry and naked."

By advocating the combination of the political *and* economic approach Bukharin slipped into *eclecticism* in theory.

Trotsky and Bukharin try to make it appear that they are concerned about increasing production, whereas we are only concerned about formal democracy. This presentation is wrong, because the *only* way the matter stands (and it is the only way the matter *can* stand from the Marxian point of view) is that without a proper political approach to the subject the given class cannot maintain its rule, and *consequently* cannot solve *its own production problems*.

To put it more concretely. Zinoviev says:

"By leading to splits in the trade unions you are committing a political mistake. I spoke and wrote about the growth of production as far back as January 1920 and quoted the construction of public baths as an example."

Trotsky replies:

"What a clever thing, to be sure, to write a pamphlet and quote public baths as an example!" (p. 29). "But you do not say 'a word,' 'not a single word'" (p. 22) "about what the trade unions should do."

It is not true. The example of the public baths is worth, excuse the pun, ten "production atmospheres," with several "industrial democracies" thrown in. The example of the public baths clearly and simply tells precisely the masses, precisely "the very

depths," what the trade unions should do, whereas "production atmospheres" and "democracies" are dust thrown in the eyes of the masses of the workers, which *makes it difficult* for them to understand things.

Comrade Trotsky also hurls the following reproach at me:

"Lenin has not said a word" (p. 66) about "what role the levers which are called the apparatus of the trade unions play and should play."

Excuse me, Comrade Trotsky; after reading the whole of Rudzutak's theses and associating myself with them, I spoke about this *more fully, more correctly, more simply and more clearly* than you did in the whole of your theses and in the whole of your report or co-report and speech in reply to the debate. For, I repeat, bonuses in kind and disciplinary comrades' courts have a hundred times more significance for mastering economy, for managing industry and for raising the role of the trade unions in production than absolutely abstract (and therefore empty) words about "industrial democracy," "coalescence," etc.

On the pretext of advancing the "production" point of view (Trotsky), or of overcoming the one-sidedness of the political approach and of combining this approach with the economic approach (Bukharin) we get:

1) Forgetting Marxism, expressed in a theoretically incorrect, eclectic definition of the relation between politics and economics.

2) Defence, or concealment, of the political mistake expressed in the shaking up policy that permeates *the whole* of Trotsky's pamphlet-platform. And if this mistake is not admitted and corrected, it will *lead* to the fall of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

3) A step backward in the sphere of purely production, economic questions, of questions concerning the way to increase production; to be precise a step backward from Rudzutak's *practical* theses, which set concrete, practical, vital, living tasks (develop production propaganda, learn to distribute bonuses in kind properly and to employ coercion more properly in the form of comrades' disciplinary courts), to abstract, "empty," theoretically

wrong, general *theses*, formulated in a highbrow manner, in which what is most businesslike and practical is *forgotten*.

This is the true relation between Zinoviev and myself on the one side and Trotsky and Bukharin on the other on the question of politics and economics.

That is why I could not help smiling when I read the answer Trotsky made to me in his speech on December 30:

"In his speech in reply to the debate at the Eighth Congress of Soviets on his report on our position, Comrade Lenin said that we need less politics and more business ability; and on the question of the trade unions, he put the political aspect of the question in the forefront" (p. 65).

Comrade Trotsky thought that these words were "extremely apt." As a matter of fact, they express the most utter confusion of concepts, truly boundless "ideological confusion." Of course, I have always expressed, do express, and will express, a desire that we engage less in politics and more in economics. But it is not difficult to understand that in order to fulfil these desires there must be no political dangers or *political errors*. The political errors committed by Comrade Trotsky, and aggravated, made more profound, by Comrade Bukharin, *distract* our Party from economic problems, from "production" work, and unfortunately *compel us to waste time* on rectifying these errors, on arguing against the syndicalist deviation (which leads to the fall of the dictatorship of the proletariat), on arguing against a wrong approach to the trade union movement (an approach which leads to the downfall of the Soviet government), on arguing about general "theses," instead of engaging in businesslike, practical "economic" argument about who best and most successfully distributed bonuses in kind, organised courts, achieved coalescence on the basis of Rudzutak's theses adopted by the Fifth All-Russian Conference of Trade Unions on November 2-6—whether it was the Saratov flour millers, the coal miners of the Donbas, the metal workers of Petrograd, etc.

Take the question of the utility of a "broad discussion." Here, too, we see how political mistakes distract attention from economic problems. I was opposed to the so-called "broad" discussion, and I considered, and now consider, Comrade Trotsky's disruption of the

trade union commission, on which a businesslike discussion should have taken place, a political mistake. I consider that the political mistake which the buffer group headed by Bukharin committed was that it did not understand the tasks of a buffer (here too they substituted eclecticism for dialectics); it is precisely from the "buffer" point of view that they should have furiously opposed a broad discussion and have been in favour of transferring the discussion to the trade union commission. See what resulted.

On December 30 Bukharin went so far as to say:

"We proclaimed a new sacred slogan—workers' democracy, which means that all questions are to be discussed, not in small collegiums, not at small meetings, not in one's own corporation, but at big meetings. And I assert that by bringing the question of the role of the trade unions before the present huge meeting we are not taking a step backward but a step forward" (p. 45).

And this man accused Zinoviev of "spouting," and of exaggerating democracy! All he says is nothing more than spouting and "splashing," a complete failure to understand that formal democracy must be subordinated to revolutionary expediency!

Trotsky's position is not a bit better. He comes forward with the charge:

"Lenin wants at all costs to prevent, to disrupt a discussion on the essence of the question" (p. 65).

He declares:

"On the Central Committee I stated clearly why I would not go on to the commission: until I am permitted, equally with all other comrades, to discuss these questions in their full scope in the Party press I expect nothing useful from this cloister discussion of these questions, and hence from work on the commission" (p. 69).

And what is the result? Hardly a month has passed since Trotsky started the "broad discussion" on December 25, and there is hardly one in a hundred responsible Party workers who is not sick and tired of this discussion, who does not see its futility (if not worse). For Trotsky has wasted the Party's time on arguments about words, about bad theses; and he has denounced as a "cloister" discussion precisely what would have been a *practical*, businesslike examination by a commission, which would have set itself the

task of studying and testing practical experience in order—by learning from this experience—to *march forward* in genuine “production” work, *and not backward*, from living work to the lifeless scholastics of all sorts of “production atmospheres.”

Take the notorious “coalescence.” On December 30, I advised silence on the question,¹ because we *had not studied* our own practical experience, and without this condition arguments about coalescence inevitably degenerate into spouting, into uselessly distracting the forces of the Party *from* economic work. I described Trotsky’s theses on this point, in which he proposes that from one-third to one-half and from one-half to two-thirds of the Councils of National Economy shall consist of representatives of the trade unions, as bureaucratic project-hatching.

Bukharin got very angry with me over this, and I see on p. 49 of the report that he tried very comprehensively and in detail to prove to me that “when people get together and talk about something they should not pretend to be deaf and dumb” (this is exactly what is printed on this page!). And Trotsky got angry too, and exclaimed:

“I ask every one of you to make a note of the fact that Comrade Lenin described this as bureaucracy on such-and-such a date; and I dare to prophesy that in a few months’ time it will be adopted, both as information and for guidance, that from one-third to one-half of the A.C.C.T.U. and the Supreme Council of National Economy, of the Central Committee of the Metal Workers’ Union and the Metal Department, etc., shall consist of representatives of each other’s organisations” (p. 68).

After reading this, I asked Comrade Milyutin (vice-chairman of the Supreme Council of National Economy) to send me the available *printed* reports on the coalescence question. I thought to myself: Well, I will *begin to study our practical experience* at least a little bit at a time, because it is awfully dull engaging in “general Party talk” (the expression Bukharin employed—p. 47—and which will perhaps become a “winged word” no less than the celebrated “shaking up”), in the air, without materials, without facts, inventing disagreements, definitions and “industrial democracies.”

Comrade Milyutin sent me several books, including *The Report*

¹ See p. 14 in this volume.— *Ed.*

of the Supreme Council of National Economy to the Eighth All-Russian Congress of Soviets (Moscow, preface dated December 19, 1920). Page 14 of this book contains a table showing the extent to which workers take part in the administrative bodies. I shall quote this table (which covers only part of the Gubernia Councils of National Economy and factories):

Administrative Body	Total Members	Workers		Specialists		Office Employees and others	
		No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Presidium of Supreme Council of National Economy and Gubernia Councils of National Economy . . .	187	107	57.2	22	11.8	58	31.0
Collegiums of Chief Committees, Departments, Central Boards and Head Offices . .	140	72	51.4	31	22.2	37	26.4
Collegium and individual managements of factories	1,143	726	63.5	398	34.8	19	1.7
Total	1,470	905	61.6	451	30.7	114	7.7

Thus already, workers comprise on the average 61.6 per cent, *i.e.*, nearer two-thirds than half! The bureaucratic project-hatching character of what Comrade Trotsky has written in his theses is *already proved*. To talk, to argue and to write platforms about "from one-third to one-half" or "from one-half to two-thirds" is the most useless sort of "general Party talk," which distracts forces, funds, attention and time from *production* work; it is just "politics" without serious content. But in the commission, where there would have been people with experience, where no one would have agreed to write theses without first studying the facts, it would have been possible usefully to engage in testing experience, say, by questioning a score or so (out of the thousand mutual representatives), by comparing their impressions and conclusions with the objective data of statistics, and to try to obtain businesslike practical

guidance for the future in regard to whether, on the basis of such and such experience, to move forward immediately in the same direction, or to change the direction, methods and approach somewhat, and if so how; or whether it would be in the interests of the work to halt, to test the experience again and again, perhaps make changes here and there, etc., etc.

Comrades, a real "businessman" (permit me also to engage in "production propaganda" a little bit!) knows that the capitalists and organisers of trusts, even in the most advanced countries, have for years, and sometimes even for ten years and more, been studying and testing their own (and others') practical experience, correcting and altering what was started, going back, correcting things many times, in order to obtain a system of management, a selection of higher and lower administrators, etc., that would fully suit the given business. That is how it was under capitalism, which throughout the civilised world has relied in its business affairs upon the *experience and habits of centuries*. We are building on new ground, which demands long, persistent and patient work on remoulding the habits which capitalism left us as a heritage, and which can be remoulded only very gradually. To approach this question as Trotsky does is radically wrong. In his speech on December 30 he exclaimed:

"Have our workers, our Party and trade union workers, had industrial training, yes or no? I answer, 'No'" (p. 29.).

It is ridiculous to approach such a question in this way. It is as if you were asking: Has this army division a sufficient supply of felt boots, yes or no?

Even in ten years' time we shall probably have to say that not all our Party and trade union workers have sufficient industrial training, just as in ten years' time not all the Party, trade union, and War Department workers will have sufficient military training. But we have made a *beginning* with industrial training by the fact that about a thousand workers, members and delegates of trade unions, participate in the work of management boards, and manage factories, head offices and higher bodies. The fundamental principle of "industrial training," of the training of *ourselves*, the old

underground workers and professional journalists, is that we ourselves set to work, and teach others to set to work, to study our own practical experience in the most careful and detailed manner in accordance with the rule: "Measure your cloth seven times before you cut." Persistent, slow, careful, practical and businesslike testing of what this thousand has done; still more careful and practical correcting of their work and advancing only after the usefulness of the given method, the given system of management, the given proportion, the given selection of persons, etc., has been fully proved—such is the basic, fundamental, absolute rule of "industrial training"; and it is precisely this rule that Comrade Trotsky breaks with all his theses and his whole approach to the question. All Comrade Trotsky's theses, the whole of his pamphlet-platform, are such that by their mistakes they have distracted the attention and forces of the Party from practical "production" work to empty and vapid word-spinning.

DIALECTICS AND ECLECTICISM. "SCHOOL" AND "APPARATUS"

Among Comrade Bukharin's numerous very valuable qualities is his ability as a theoretician and the keen interest he displays in delving down to the theoretical roots of every problem. This is very valuable, because no mistake, including political mistakes, can be properly explained unless one gets right down to its theoretical roots in the mind of the one who makes the mistake, on the basis of definite, deliberately adopted propositions.

In conformity with his striving to theoretically deepen a problem, Comrade Bukharin, beginning with the discussion of December 30, if not earlier, shifts the dispute precisely to this field. In his speech on December 30 Comrade Bukharin said:

"I think it is absolutely necessary—and herein lies the theoretical essence of what is here called the 'buffer' faction, or of its ideology—and it seems to me to be absolutely incontrovertible, that neither the political nor the economic factor should be thrust aside" (p. 47).

The theoretical essence of the mistake which Comrade Bukharin makes here is that he substitutes eclecticism for the dialectical

relations between politics and economics (which Marxism teaches us.) "Both the one and the other," "on the one hand and on the other hand"—such is Bukharin's theoretical position. This is exactly what eclecticism is. Dialectics demand the all-sided consideration of relationships in their concrete development and not the pulling of a piece out of one thing and a piece out of another. I have already proved this by the example of politics and economics.

It is equally undoubted in the example of the "buffer." A buffer is useful and necessary if the Party train is rushing down an incline towards a crash. This is indisputable. Bukharin presented the "buffer" problem eclectically, taking a piece from Zinoviev and a piece from Trotsky. As a "bufferist," Bukharin should have independently determined where, when and how this or that person makes a mistake, whether it is a theoretical mistake, a mistake of political tactlessness, a factional mistake in a pronouncement, or a mistake of exaggeration, etc., and attacked *every* such mistake with *all his might*. Bukharin has not understood his task as a "buffer." Here is striking proof of this.

The Communist fraction of the Petrograd Bureau of the Cectran (the Central Committee of the Railway and Water Transport Workers' Union)—an organisation which sympathises with Trotsky and openly declares that in its opinion "on the main question of the role of the trade unions in production the positions of Comrades Trotsky and Bukharin are varieties of one and the same point of view"—published in Petrograd in pamphlet form the co-report Comrade Bukharin delivered in Petrograd on January 3, 1921 (N. Bukharin, *The Tasks of the Trade Unions*, Petrograd, 1921). In this co-report we read:

"Originally, Comrade Trotsky formulated it in such a way as to mean that the leading members of the trade unions ought to be removed, that suitable comrades were to be selected, etc.; but still earlier he even held the 'shaking up' point of view, which he has now abandoned, and it is therefore absolutely absurd to advance 'shaking up' as an argument against Comrade Trotsky" (p. 5).

I will not dwell on the numerous factual inexactitudes contained in this statement. (The catchword "shaking up" was used by Trotsky at the Fifth All-Russian Conference of Trade Unions,

November 2-6. Trotsky talked about "selecting the leading personnel" in point 5 of the theses he submitted to the Central Committee on November 8, and, incidentally, published by one of Trotsky's adherents as a leaflet. The whole of Trotsky's pamphlet, *The Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions*, of December 25, is thoroughly permeated with the same idea, with the same spirit, as I have already said before. Where and how the "abandonment" was expressed is absolutely unknown.) I am dealing with a different subject now. If a "buffer" is eclectic, it passes over some mistakes, mentions others, says nothing about mistakes on December 30, 1920, in Moscow before thousands of workers of the R.C.P. from all over Russia, and speaks about mistakes in Petrograd on January 3, 1921. If a "buffer" is dialectic, it attacks with all its might all the mistakes it sees on both sides, or on all sides. This is exactly what Bukharin does not do. He does not even attempt to examine Trotsky's pamphlet from the point of view of the shaking up policy. *He simply keeps quiet about it.* It is not surprising that his way of fulfilling the role of buffer makes everybody laugh.

To proceed. In this Petrograd speech of Comrade Bukharin's, on p. 7, we read:

"The mistake Comrade Trotsky makes is that he does not sufficiently support the school of Communism factor."

During the discussion of December 30 Bukharin argued in the following way:

"Comrade Zinoviev said that the trade unions are a school of Communism, and Trotsky said that they are an administrative-technical apparatus for the management of industry. I see no logical grounds that would prove that the first or the second is wrong; both these propositions, and the combination of both propositions, are right" (p. 48).

The same idea is contained in thesis 6 of Bukharin and his "group," or "faction":

"On the one hand they [the trade unions] are 'schools of Communism.' . . . On the other hand they are—and to an increasing degree—a constituent part of the economic apparatus and of the state apparatus in general" (*Pravda*, January 16).

Herein lies Comrade Bukharin's fundamental theoretical mistake, *viz.*, the substitution of eclecticism (which is particularly wide-

spread among the authors of various "fashionable" and reactionary philosophical systems) for the dialectics of Marxism.

Comrade Bukharin talks about "logical" grounds. The whole of his argument shows that he—perhaps unconsciously—holds the point of view of formal, or scholastic, logic and not of dialectical, or Marxian, logic. In order to explain what I mean, I shall start with the very simple example which Comrade Bukharin himself has given. During the discussion on December 30 he said:

"Comrades, perhaps the controversy that is going on here is making the following impression upon many of you: two men meet and ask each other: What is the glass that is standing on the rostrum? One says: 'It is a glass cylinder, and he who says it is not, let him be anathemised.' The other says: 'A glass is a drinking vessel, and he who says it is not, let him be anathemised'" (p. 46).

As the reader will see, Bukharin wanted, with the aid of this example, to explain to me in a popular manner the harmfulness of one-sidedness. I gratefully accept this explanation, and in order to prove my gratitude with deeds I will reciprocate by giving a popular explanation of what eclecticism is, as distinct from dialectics.

A glass is undoubtedly a glass cylinder and a drinking vessel. But a glass not only has these two properties, or qualities, or sides, but an infinite number of other properties, qualities, sides, interrelations and "mediation" with the rest of the world. A glass is a heavy object which may be used as a missile. A glass may serve as a paperweight, as a jar to keep a captive butterfly in, a glass may have value as an object with an artistic engraving or design, quite apart from the fact that it can be used as a drinking vessel, that it is made of glass, that its form is cylindrical, or not quite so, and so on and so forth.

To proceed. If I now need a glass as a drinking vessel it is not at all important for me to know whether its form is completely cylindrical and whether it is really made of glass; what is important is that its bottom shall not be cracked, that it should not cut my lips when I drink from it, etc. If I need a glass, not for drinking purposes, but for some purpose that any glass cylinder could serve, then even a glass with a cracked bottom, or even with no bottom at all, would do.

Formal logic, which schools confine themselves to (and which, with modifications, the lower forms should confine themselves to), takes formal definitions, and is guided exclusively by what is most customary, or most often noted. If in this two or more different definitions are combined quite casually (a glass cylinder and a drinking vessel), we get an eclectic definition which points to various sides of the object and nothing more.

Dialectical logic demands that we go further. In the first place, in order really to know an object we must embrace, study, all its sides, all connections and "mediations." We shall never achieve this completely, but the demand for all-sidedness is a safeguard against mistakes and rigidity. Secondly, dialectical logic demands that we take an object in its development, its "self-movement" (as Hegel sometimes puts it), in its changes. In relation to a glass this is not clear at once, but even a glass does not remain unchanged, particularly the purpose of the glass, its use, its *connections* with the surrounding world. Thirdly, the whole of human experience should enter the full "definition" of an object as a criterion of the truth and as a practical index of the object's connection with what man requires. Fourthly, dialectical logic teaches that "there is no abstract truth, truth is always concrete," as the late Plekhanov was fond of saying after Hegel (in parenthesis I think it would be appropriate to observe for the benefit of the young members of the Party that it is *impossible* to become an intelligent, *real* Communist without studying—precisely *studying*—all that Plekhanov wrote on philosophy, because that is the best there is in the whole international literature on Marxism).¹

Of course, I have not exhausted the concept of dialectical logic, but I think what I have said is sufficient for the time being. We can

¹ Incidentally, one cannot help desiring, firstly, that in the edition of Plekhanov's works now appearing, all the articles on philosophy be collected in a separate volume, or volumes, with the most detailed index, etc.; for this should be included in the series of compulsory textbooks on Communism. Secondly, in my opinion, the workers' state ought to demand of professors of philosophy that they be familiar with Plekhanov's exposition of Marxian philosophy, and that they be able to convey this knowledge to their students. But all this is already a digression from "propaganda" to "administering."

now pass from the glass to the trade unions and to Trotsky's platform.

"On the one hand a school, on the other an apparatus," says Bukharin, and writes it in his theses. Trotsky's mistake is that he did not "sufficiently support the school factor . . ." and Zinoviev's defect lies in the apparatus "factor."

Why is this argument of Bukharin's lifeless and vapid eclecticism? Because Bukharin does not make the slightest attempt, independently, from his own point of view, to analyse the whole history of the present controversy (Marxism, *i.e.*, dialectical logic, absolutely demands this) and the whole approach to the question, the whole presentation—or, if you will, the whole trend of the presentation—of the question at the present time, under the present concrete conditions. Bukharin does not make the slightest attempt to do this! He approaches the subject without the faintest attempt at a concrete study, with bare abstractions, and takes a little piece from Zinoviev and a little piece from Trotsky. This is eclecticism.

In order to illustrate this more graphically, I will quote an example. I know nothing about the insurgents and revolutionaries of South China (except two or three articles by Sun Yat-sen and several books and newspaper articles which I read many years ago). Since insurrections are taking place there, there are probably controversies between Chinese No. 1, who says that insurrection is the product of the most acute class struggle which embraces the whole nation, and Chinese No. 2, who says that insurrection is an art. I could write theses like Bukharin's without knowing any more: "On the one hand . . . on the other hand." One did not sufficiently take into account the "art factor," the other did not sufficiently take into account the "acuteness factor," etc. This will be lifeless and vapid eclecticism, because it lacks the *concrete* study of the *given* controversy, of the given question, of the given approach to it, etc.

On the one hand the trade unions are a school, on the other hand they are an apparatus, thirdly, they are organisations of the toilers, fourthly, they are almost exclusively organisations of the industrial workers, fifthly, they are organisations according to

industry,¹ etc., etc. Bukharin gives no grounds whatever, he makes no independent analysis, does not produce a scrap of evidence to prove why the first two "aspects" of the question, or subject, should be taken, and not the third, fourth, fifth, etc. That is why the theses of the Bukharin group are also just an eclectic squib. Bukharin puts the whole question of the relation between "school" and "apparatus" in a radically wrong, eclectic manner.

In order to put the question properly we must pass from empty abstractions to the concrete, *i.e.*, to the present controversy. Take this controversy as you like, either as it arose at the Fifth All-Russian Conference of Trade Unions, or as it was presented and *directed* by Trotsky himself in his pamphlet-platform of December 25; you will see that Trotsky's *whole* approach, his whole trend, is wrong. He has failed to understand that it is necessary and possible to approach the trade unions as a school even when one raises the subject of "Soviet trade unionism," even when one speaks of production propaganda in general, and even when one puts the question of "coalescence," of the trade unions participating in the management of industry, *in the way* Trotsky does. And as regards the latter question, in the manner in which it is presented throughout Trotsky's pamphlet-platform, the mistake lies in the failure to understand that the trade unions are a *school of administrative-technical management of production*. Not "on the one hand a school and on the other hand something different," but *from all aspects*, in the present controversy, with the question as now presented by Trotsky, *trade unions are a school*, a school of unity, a school of solidarity, a school for learning how to protect one's interests, a school of management, a school of administration. Instead of understanding and rectifying this fundamental error of Comrade Trotsky's, Comrade Bukharin made a ridiculous little amendment: "On the one hand . . . on the other hand."

Let us approach the question still more concretely. Let us see

¹ Incidentally, Trotsky makes a mistake even here. He thinks that an industrial union is a union which is to command industry. This is wrong. An industrial union is a union that organises the workers according to industry, which is inevitable at the present level of technique and culture (in Russia and in the whole world).

what the present trade unions are as an "apparatus" for the management of production. We have seen from incomplete returns that about nine hundred workers—members and delegates of trade unions—are engaged in the management of production. Increase this figure tenfold if you will, or even a hundredfold; as a concession to you and in order to explain your fundamental mistake, let us even assume such an incredibly rapid "advance" in the near future—even then we get an insignificant number of those directly engaged in *management* compared with the general mass of six million members of trade unions. And from this it is still more clearly evident that to concentrate all attention on the "leading stratum" as Trotsky does, to talk about the role of the trade unions in production and about managing production, without taking into account the fact that $98\frac{1}{2}$ per cent *are learning* ($6,000,000 - 90,000 = 5,910,000 = 98\frac{1}{2}\%$ of the total) *and will have to learn for a long time*, means committing a fundamental mistake. Not school *and* management, but *school of management*.

In arguing against Zinoviev on December 30 and accusing him, quite wrongly and without foundation, of denying the "appointment" system, *i.e.*, the right and duty of the Central Committee to appoint, Comrade Trotsky inadvertently drew an extremely characteristic contrast. He said:

"Zinoviev approaches every practical question too much from the propagandist point of view, and forgets that here we not only have *material* for agitation, but a problem which must be solved administratively" (p. 27).

I will explain in detail in a moment what an administrator's approach to the present question *could be*. But Comrade Trotsky's fundamental mistake lies precisely in that he approached (or, more correctly, rushed at) *the very questions* he himself raised in his pamphlet-platform, *as an administrator*, whereas he could and should have approached *these questions exclusively as a propagandist*.

Indeed, what is good about Trotsky? Not his theses, but in his *speeches*, particularly when he forgets about his unfortunate polemics with the alleged "conservative" wing of the trade unionists, his *production propaganda* is undoubtedly good and useful. Had

he taken a practical, "businesslike" part in the work of the trade union commission, as a speaker and writer, as member of and worker in the All-Russian Bureau of Production Propaganda, Comrade Trotsky would undoubtedly have done useful work (and he will undoubtedly do useful work). His mistake was his "theses-platform." Through it there runs like a red thread the administrator's approach to the "crisis" in the trade union organisations, to the two "trends" in the trade unions, to the interpretation of the programme of the R.C.P., to "Soviet trade unionism," to "industrial training" and to "coalescence." I have just enumerated all the main subjects of Trotsky's "platform," and the proper approach to such subjects at the present time, with the material Trotsky has in his possession, can only be a propagandist approach.

The state belongs to the sphere of coercion. It would be madness to renounce coercion, particularly in the epoch of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Here "administering" and the administrator's approach are essential. The Party is the directly ruling vanguard of the proletariat, it is the leader. Expulsion from the Party and not coercion is the specific means of influencing the membership, the means of purging and hardening the vanguard. The trade unions are reservoirs of state power, a school of Communism, a school of management. In this sphere the specific and main thing is *not* administration but "*contacts*" "*between* the central" (and local, of course) "state administration, national economy and the *broad masses* of the toilers" (as our Party programme says, in point 5 of the economic section, dealing with the trade unions).

The wrong presentation of this question, the failure to understand this relationship, run like a red thread through the whole of Trotsky's pamphlet-platform.

Imagine that Trotsky had developed this notorious "coalescence" in connection with the other themes of his programme, by approaching the whole question from another angle. Imagine that his pamphlet had been devoted entirely to the task of investigating in detail say ninety out of the nine hundred cases of "coalescence," cases of members of trade unions and permanent members of the staffs of trade unions occupying joint positions as members of

the Supreme Council of National Economy in managing industry, and as elected trade union officials. Imagine that these ninety cases had been analysed together with the returns of a selected statistical investigation, with the reports of the inspectors and instructors of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, and of the corresponding People's Commissariats, *i.e.*, analysed on the basis of the returns of the administrative institutions, analysed from the point of view of the summaries and results of the work, of the achievements of production, etc. Such an approach to the question would have been a proper administrator's approach and would have fully justified the "shaking up" line, *i.e.*, the concentration of attention on whom to remove, whom to replace, whom to appoint, what immediate demands to make upon the "leading stratum." In his speech of January 3 in Petrograd, published by the Cectran, Bukharin said that at first Trotsky had adopted the "shaking up" point of view and that he had now abandoned it; but here too Bukharin drops into eclecticism which is ridiculous from the practical point of view and absolutely impermissible for a Marxist from a theoretical point of view. Bukharin takes the question abstractly, being unable (or unwilling) to approach it concretely. As long as we, the Central Committee of the Party, and the whole Party, administer, *i.e.*, administer the state, we shall never renounce, nor can we ever renounce, "shaking up," *i.e.*, removing, replacing, appointing, dismissing, etc. But Trotsky does not take this material for his pamphlet-platform, he does not raise the "practical businesslike question." It is not the "practical businesslike question" that Zinoviev and Trotsky, Bukharin and I and the whole Party are arguing about, but the question of the "*trends* in the sphere of the trade union movement" (end of Trotsky's thesis 4).

In essence, this is a political question. Owing to the very essence of the case, of the present concrete "case," it is impossible to rectify Trotsky's mistakes with eclectic amendments and addenda, as Bukharin, filled with the most humane sentiments and intentions, of course, wants to do.

Here there can be one solution, and one solution only.

Firstly, to find a proper solution of the political problem of

the "trends in the sphere of the trade union movement," of the relation between classes, of the relation between politics and economics, of the specific roles of the state, the Party, the trade unions—"school" and apparatus, etc.

Secondly, on the basis of a correct political solution, to conduct a campaign for—or rather to carry on—prolonged, systematic, persistent, patient, varied, repeated production propaganda on a nation-wide scale in the name and under the guidance of a state institution.

Thirdly, not to confuse "practical businesslike questions" with controversies about trends, which (controversies) are a legitimate attribute of "general Party talk" and wide discussions, but to discuss them in a practical way on businesslike commissions which shall examine witnesses, study reports and statistics; and on the basis of all this—only on this basis and only under such conditions—to "shake up" only on the decisions of the competent Soviet or Party organs, or both.

Trotsky and Bukharin have presented us with a hodge-podge of political mistakes in approach, with transmission contacts, transmission belts broken in the middle, and useless rushing at, or raiding, "administration," all at a loose end. The "theoretical" source of the mistake—since Bukharin with his "glass" raised the question of the theoretical source—is clear. Bukharin's theoretical—in the present case gnoseological—mistake lies in his substitution of eclectics for dialectics. Presenting the question eclectically, Bukharin dropped into utter confusion and went so far as to talk syndicalism. Trotsky's mistake is one-sidedness, infatuation, exaggeration and obstinacy. According to Trotsky's platform a glass is a drinking vessel, whereas this particular glass has no bottom.

CONCLUSION

Now I have only to touch briefly upon several points my silence concerning which may give rise to misunderstanding.

In thesis 6 of his "platform" Comrade Trotsky reproduces point 5 of the economic section of the programme of the R.C.P.,

which deals with the trade unions. Two pages further on, in thesis 8, Comrade Trotsky declares:

"Having lost the old basis of their existence—the class economic struggle—the trade unions" (This is not true, it is a hasty exaggeration: the trade unions have lost the basis of the *class* economic struggle, but have not by far lost, and, unfortunately, cannot lose for many years to come, the basis of the *non-class* "economic struggle," meaning by that the struggle against the bureaucratic distortions of the Soviet apparatus, the protection of the material and spiritual interests of the masses of the toilers by the ways and means that this apparatus cannot employ, etc.), "owing to a number of circumstances, have not yet succeeded in collecting in their ranks the necessary forces and in working out the necessary methods by which they could become capable of solving the new problem, viz., of *organising production*, with which the proletarian revolution has confronted them and which is formulated in our programme" (Trotsky's italics. p. 9, thesis 8).

This again is a hasty exaggeration which contains the embryo of a serious error. The programme does not contain such a formulation and does not set before the trade unions the problem of "organising production." Let us trace step by step every idea, every proposition contained in our Party programme in the order in which they run in the text of the programme:

1) "The organisational" (not any kind) "apparatus of socialised industry must in the first place" (and not exclusively) "rely on the trade unions." 2) "The latter must to an increasing degree free themselves from the narrow craft spirit" (How can they free themselves? Under the leadership of the Party and under the educational and every other influence the proletariat exercises on the non-proletarian toiling masses) "and become big industrial associations embracing the majority and gradually all the workers in the given branch of industry."

This is the first part of the section of the Party programme that deals with the trade unions. As you see, this section immediately lays down very "*strict conditions*" demanding very prolonged work for the next thing. And this next thing is the following:

"Since, according to the laws of the Soviet Republic and by established practice, the trade unions already participate" (As you see, the words are very cautious: only participate) "in all the local and central organs of management of industry, they must eventually actually concentrate in their hands the entire management of the whole of national economy as a single economic unit" (Note: must eventually concentrate in their hands the management, not of branches of industry, and not of industry, but of the

whole of national economy, and, moreover, as a single economic unit: this condition, as an economic condition, cannot be regarded as being really achievable until the number of small producers in industry and agriculture has been reduced to less than half the population and of national economy). "Ensuring in this way" (precisely "in this way," by which all the aforementioned conditions will be gradually achieved) "indissoluble ties between the central state administration, national economy and the broad masses of the toilers, the trade unions must to the widest possible extent draw the latter" (i.e., the masses, i.e., the majority of the population) "into the direct work of managing economy. At the same time the participation of the trade unions in the management of economy and their drawing the broad masses into this work are the principal means of combating the bureaucratisation of the economic apparatus of the Soviet government and render possible the establishment of genuine popular control over the results of production."

Thus, the last sentence also contains the very cautious words "participation in the management of economy," again a reference to the need of drawing in the broad masses as the principal (but not the only) means of combating bureaucracy; and, in conclusion, an extremely cautious statement: "*render possible*" the establishment of "*popular*," i.e., workers' and peasants' and not only proletarian, "*control*."

To sum all this up in such a way as to make it appear that our Party programme "formulated" the task of the trade unions as being that of "organising production" is obviously wrong. And if this error is persisted in, if it is embodied in a theses-platform, nothing but an anti-Communist, syndicalist deviation can result from it.

Incidentally, Comrade Trotsky writes in his theses that:

"Of late we have not approached any nearer to the aim set forth in our programme; on the contrary, we have become further removed from it" (p. 7, thesis 6).

This is a bare, unsupported statement, and I think it is untrue. In the first place, it cannot be proved, as Trotsky tried to do during the discussion, by a reference to the fact that the trade unions "themselves" have admitted this. This is not the final court of appeal for the Party. And generally speaking, this can be proved only by a very serious objective study of a large number of facts. Secondly, even if this were proved, the question "Why have we become further removed?" still remains an open one. Is it because

"many trade unionists" "brush aside new tasks and methods." as Trotsky thinks, or is it because "we" "have not yet succeeded in collecting in our ranks the necessary forces and in working out the necessary methods" by which "certain unnecessary and harmful excesses of bureaucracy could be put a stop to and rectified"?

In this connection it will be appropriate to touch upon the reproach which Comrade Bukharin hurled at us on December 30 (and which Trotsky repeated yesterday, January 24, during our discussion at a meeting of the Communist fraction of the Second Congress of the Miners' Union) namely, of "renouncing the line laid down by the Ninth Congress of the Party" (p. 46 of the report of the discussion of December 30).

This is as much as saying: At the Ninth Congress Lenin advocated the militarisation of labour and mocked at references to democracy,¹ and now he has "renounced" this. In his reply to the debate on December 30, Comrade Trotsky, as it were, added a little pepper to the reproach. He said:

"Lenin takes account of the fact that a grouping of oppositionally-minded comrades is taking place in the trade unions" (p. 65); Lenin approaches the matter "from the diplomatic point of view" (p. 69); "angling among the Party groups" (p. 70), etc.

Trotsky's explanation of the case is, of course, very flattering for Trotsky and worse than unflattering for me. But let us glance at the facts.

At the same discussion of December 30, Trotsky and Krestinsky assert that:

"As far back as July [1920] Comrade Preobrazhensky raised on the Central Committee the question of our having to adopt a new line in regard to the internal life of our workers' organisations" (p. 25).

In August Comrade Zinoviev draws up, and the Central Committee endorses, a *letter of the Central Committee* on combating bureaucracy and extending democracy. In September, the question is raised at the Party conference, and the latter's decision is endorsed by the Central Committee. In December, the question of

¹ See "Report of the Central Committee at the Ninth Congress of the R.C.P., March 29, 1920," *Selected Works*, Vol. VIII.—Ed.

combating bureaucracy is raised at the Eighth Congress of Soviets. Hence, the whole Central Committee, the whole Party and the whole workers' and peasants' republic have recognised the necessity of raising the question of bureaucracy and of how to combat it. Does this mean "renouncing" the Ninth Congress of the R.C.P.? No. There is no renunciation here whatever. The decisions on the militarisation of labour, etc., are incontrovertible, and there is no need whatever for me to withdraw my words of ridicule concerning the references to democracy made by those who challenged these decisions. The only thing that follows from this is that we shall extend democracy in the workers' organisations, but not make a fetish of it; that we shall devote serious attention to the fight against bureaucracy; that we shall with extraordinary care rectify all unnecessary and harmful excesses of bureaucracy, no matter who points them out.

Just one last remark on the minor question of preference and equalitarianism. During the discussion on December 30, I said that Comrade Trotsky's formulation of his thesis 41 on this point is theoretically wrong because, according to him, what we needed was equality in consumption, but urgency in production. I answered that urgency meant preference, and preference without preference in consumption was nothing. Comrade Trotsky reproaches me for this, and for my "extraordinary forgetfulness" and my "intimidation" (pp. 67-68). I am surprised that there are no reproaches about my angling, my diplomacy, etc. He, Trotsky, made concessions to my equalitarian line and yet I attack him.

As a matter of fact, the reader who interests himself in Party affairs has definite Party documents available to him, *i.e.*, the resolution of the November Plenum of the Central Committee, point 4, and thesis 41 of Trotsky's theses-platform. However "forgetful" I may be, and however good Comrade Trotsky's memory may be, the fact remains that thesis 41 contains a theoretical error which the resolution of the Central Committee of November 9 does not contain. This resolution reads as follows: "While recognising the necessity of preserving the principle of preference in carrying out

the economic plan, the C.C. fully associates itself with the decisions of the last [*i.e.*, September] all-Russian conference and considers that a gradual but steady transition to equality in the position of the various groups of workers and of the corresponding trade unions is necessary, while all the time strengthening the general trade union organisations." Clearly, this is directed against the Cectran, and it is utterly impossible to give this resolution any other interpretation. Preference is not abolished. Preference for the urgent (in regard to fulfilling the economic plan) enterprise, trade union, trust and department remains; but at the same time, the "equalitarian line," not advocated by "Comrade Lenin," but *endorsed by the Party conference and the C.C., i.e., the whole Party*, clearly demands the *transition* to equality, gradually, but steadily. That the Cectran did not carry out the November resolution of the C.C. is evident from the December decision of the C.C. (carried through by Trotsky and Bukharin) in which we once again find a reference to "the principles of normal democracy." The theoretical error in thesis 41 lies in that it says: In the sphere of consumption—equality, in the sphere of production—preference. This is absurd from the economic point of view because it implies a rupture between consumption and production. I did not say, and could not have said, any such thing. If a factory is not required, close it down; close down all the factories that are not absolutely necessary. Of those that are absolutely necessary, give preference to the urgent factories. Let us say, preference to transport. Certainly. But this preference must not be excessive; and because it was excessive in the Cectran, the instructions of the *Party* (and not of Lenin) were: pass gradually, but steadily, to equality. If after the November plenum, which gave a precise and theoretically correct solution, Trotsky comes out with a factional pamphlet about "two trends," and in thesis 41 proposes his formula, which is wrong from the point of view of economics, it is his own lookout.

* * *

Today, January 25, is exactly a month since Trotsky made his factional pronouncement. That the Party was distracted by this pronouncement—which was inexpedient in form and wrong in

essence—from businesslike, practical, economic and productive work, distracted in order to rectify political and theoretical errors, is now very clearly evident. But the old proverb quite rightly says, "It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good."

According to rumour, monstrous things have been said about the internal disagreements on the Central Committee. Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries found (and undoubtedly still find) shelter near the opposition, and they spread rumours, suggest unbelievably malicious formulations and invent fables in order to cast aspersions, to give a filthy interpretation, to aggravate the conflicts within and spoil the work of the Party. This is a political trick of the bourgeoisie, including the petty-bourgeois democrats, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who are seething with furious rage at the Bolsheviks and cannot help doing so for obvious reasons. Every intelligent member of the Party is familiar with these political tricks of the bourgeoisie and knows their real value.

The disagreements on the C.C. made necessary an appeal to the Party. The discussion has graphically revealed the essence and magnitude of these disagreements. An end has been put to rumour and slander. The Party is learning and is becoming hardened in the struggle against the new disease (new in the sense that we forgot about it after the October Revolution), *viz.*, factionalism. In essence it is an old disease, relapses of which are probably inevitable for several years to come, but the cure of which can and should now proceed much more quickly and easily.

The Party is learning not to exaggerate disagreements. Here it would be appropriate to repeat what Comrade Trotsky quite rightly said about Comrade Tomsky:

"Even in the sharpest controversy with Comrade Tomsky I always said that it was absolutely clear to me that only people with the experience and prestige of Comrade Tomsky could be leaders of our trade unions. I said this at the meeting of the Communist fraction of the Fifth Conference of Trade Unions, and I also said it a few days ago at the Zimin Theatre. Ideological struggle in the Party does not mean thrusting each other aside, but influencing each other" (p. 34 of the report of the discussion of December 30).

It goes without saying that the Party will apply this correct argument to Comrade Trotsky too.

The syndicalist deviation was revealed during the discussion particularly by Comrade Shlyapnikov and his group, the so-called Workers' Opposition. As this is an obvious deviation from the Party, from Communism, we must pay special attention to it, talk about it particularly; we must pay particular attention to the propaganda and explanation of the mistakenness of these views and the danger of such a mistake. Comrade Bukharin, who went so far as to utter the syndicalist phrase "compulsory nominations" (of members of the trade unions to the management bodies), defends himself in *Pravda* today very clumsily and obviously wrongly. He, if you please, talks about the role of the Party in other points! Of course he does! Had he not done so it would have been tantamount to leaving the Party. Had he not done so it would not have been merely a *mistake* requiring rectification and easily rectifiable. If we spoke of "compulsory nominations" and did not immediately add that they are *not* compulsory for the Party, it would be a syndicalist deviation, it would be *irreconcilable* with Communism, *irreconcilable* with the Party programme of the R.C.P. If we added "*not* compulsory for the Party," we would be deceiving the non-party workers with the phantom of a sort of increase of their rights, whereas there will be no change whatever compared with what the position is now. The more Comrade Bukharin defends his deviation from Communism, which is obviously wrong theoretically and deceptive politically, the more deplorable will be the fruits of his obstinacy. But it is impossible to defend what is indefensible. The Party is not opposed to the extension of the rights of non-party workers as such; but a little reflection should be sufficient to enable one to understand by what methods this can be achieved, and what methods should not be employed.

During the discussion in the Communist fraction of the Second All-Russian Congress of the Miners' Union, Shlyapnikov's platform was defeated notwithstanding the fact that it was defended by Comrade Kiselev, who enjoys particular authority in that union: 137 votes were cast for our platform, 62 for Shlyapnikov's platform, and 8 for Trotsky's platform. The syndicalist deviation must and will be cured.

Events in one month in Petrograd, Moscow and a number of provincial cities show that the Party responded to the discussion and rejected Comrade Trotsky's mistaken line by an overwhelming majority. While there undoubtedly were vacillations in the "upper ranks," and in the "periphery," in the committees and offices, the really overwhelming majority of the rank-and-file members of the Party, of the mass of the working class membership of the Party, expressed their opposition to this mistaken line.

Comrade Kamenev has informed me that in the discussion in the Zamoskvorechye District of Moscow on January 23, Comrade Trotsky declared that he withdrew his platform and united with the Bukharin group on a new platform. Unfortunately, I did not hear a single word about this from Comrade Trotsky either on January 23 or on January 24, when he opposed me at the meeting of the Communist fraction of the miners' congress. Whether Comrade Trotsky has changed his intentions or platforms again, or whether this is due to some other reason, I do not know. At all events, Comrade Trotsky's statement of January 23 shows that the Party, even before it has managed to mobilise all its forces, and when only Petrograd, Moscow and a minority of the provincial cities have managed to express their opinion, has been able immediately, firmly, determinedly, quickly and unwaveringly to straighten out Comrade Trotsky's mistake.

The triumph of the enemies of the Party was shortlived. They have not been able, and will not be able, to take advantage of the sometimes inevitable disagreements in the Party to damage it and to damage *the dictatorship of the proletariat* in Russia.

January 25, 1921

PART II
THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY
1921

THE POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

*Report Delivered at the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.),
March 8, 1921*

COMRADES, as you know, of course, the question of the political work of the C.C. is closely interwoven with the whole work of the Party, with the whole work of the Soviet institutions, and with the whole course of the revolution. Therefore there cannot be, at least in my opinion, any thought of a report in the precise, literal sense of the word. I understand my task to be to try to single out certain of the most important events—those which in my opinion are the key points, as it were, of our work and of Soviet policy during the past year, those which are most characteristic of what we have experienced and which provide most food for thought over the causes of the progress of the revolution, of the significance of the mistakes that have been committed—and not a few have been committed—and over the lessons for the future. For however natural the task of reporting on the past year may be, however obligatory it may be for the C.C., and whatever its intrinsic interest for the whole Party, the tasks of the forthcoming struggle, and of the one that is unfolding itself before us now, are so urgent, onerous and difficult, they weigh down on us so heavily, that involuntarily all attention is concentrated on drawing proper conclusions from what we have experienced, and on finding the best solution of the problems of today and tomorrow which are absorbing the attention of us all.

Of the key points of our work during the past year which most of all attract our attention and with which, in my opinion, most of our mistakes are connected, the first is the transition from war to peace. Probably all of you, or at all events the majority of you, remember that we started this transition several times during

the past three and a half years and did not complete it once; and apparently we shall not complete it now, because the vital interests of international capitalism are too closely bound up with the prevention of the completion of this transition. I remember that as far back as April 1918, *i.e.*, three years ago, I had occasion to speak at a meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee about our tasks, which at that time were formulated in such a way as to imply that the main thing in the civil war had been accomplished, whereas actually the civil war had only just begun. You all remember that at the preceding Party congress we based all our calculations on this transition to peaceful construction on the assumption that the enormous concessions we offered to Poland at that time would ensure us peace. But in April, the offensive of the Polish bourgeoisie commenced; in conjunction with the imperialists of the capitalist countries, they interpreted our desire for peace as our weakness—for which they paid very dearly, in that they received a less advantageous peace treaty. But we were not able to pass to peaceful construction, and once again we had to concentrate our attention mainly on war against Poland, and subsequently on liquidating Wrangel. This is what has determined the content of our work during the past year. Again all our work centred around military tasks.

Then commenced the transition from war to peace, and we succeeded in securing the departure of every single soldier belonging to hostile armies from the territory of the R.S.F.S.R.

This transition entailed shocks that we failed to calculate by a very long way. Undoubtedly, this is one of the principal causes of the mistakes, errors of policy, which we committed during the period under review, and from which we are now suffering. The demobilisation of the army which had to be created in a country that had been subjected to unprecedented strain, which had to be created after several years of imperialist war—the demobilisation of the army, the transportation of which encountered incredible difficulties in view of the state of our transport facilities, at a time when famine, due to the failure of the harvest, and shortage of fuel, which very largely brought the transport system to a standstill, were added to these difficulties—this demobilisation, as we see

now, confronted us with tasks which we very greatly underestimated. Here, to a considerable degree, is the source of a number of crises—economic, social and political. Even at the end of last year I had occasion to point out that one of the principal difficulties of the forthcoming spring would be difficulties connected with the demobilisation of the army. I also had to point to this during the big discussion of December 30, in which, probably, many of you took part.¹ I must say that at that time we had only a very faint conception of the magnitude of these difficulties; not only did we not yet see then to what extent we would be faced with technical difficulties, we did not see to what extent the disasters afflicting the Soviet Republic, which had been exhausted by the previous imperialist war and the new civil war, would be aggravated during the process of demobilisation of the army. To a certain extent it would be right to say that it was during the period of demobilisation that these disasters revealed themselves in all their magnitude. For several years the country had exerted its efforts exclusively on war tasks, had sacrificed everything, did not stint the last of its scanty reserves and resources in order to carry out these tasks—and only when the war came to an end were we able to realise the degree of ruin and poverty prevailing, which for a long time will keep us engaged merely in healing our wounds. But we cannot even devote ourselves entirely to healing these wounds. The technical difficulties of demobilising the army, the impossibility of carrying out this demobilisation to a large extent reveals the depth of ruin; and from this follows, among other things, that a number of crises of an economic and social character are inevitable. The war trained us, the whole of our country, hundreds of thousands of men and women, for military tasks alone; and now, after these military tasks have been fulfilled, a large section of the army finds immeasurably worse conditions, encounters incredible difficulties in the villages, and owing to this and the general crisis it has no means of finding employment for its labour; we get something that is midway between war and peace. The position which arises is such that once again we cannot speak of peace. It is precisely the

¹ See "The Trade Unions, the Present Situation and the Mistakes of Comrade Trotsky," pp. 17-18 in this volume.—*Ed.*

demobilisation, the end of the civil war, that implies the impossibility of concentrating all our efforts on peaceful construction, because demobilisation gives rise to the continuation of war, only in another form. When tens and hundreds of thousands of demobilised men who have been accustomed to engage in war, and almost regard war as their only occupation, return home impoverished and ruined and cannot find employment for their labour power—we find ourselves drawn into a new form of war, a new type of war, which we can define with the word “banditism.”

Undoubtedly, the C.C. made a mistake in not taking into account the magnitude of the difficulties connected with demobilisation. Of course, we must say that we lacked the data to enable us to take them into account, because the civil war was so difficult that the only rule was—everything for victory on the civil war front, and only for that. Only by following this rule and by the unparalleled exertion of effort which the Red Army made in the fight against Kolchak, Yudenich and others were we able to achieve victory over the imperialists who had invaded Soviet Russia.

From these main circumstances, which determined a number of mistakes and which are intensifying the crisis, I would like to pass to the subject of how in the work of the Party and in the struggle of the whole proletariat a number of still more profound discrepancies, wrong calculations, or wrong planning, were revealed—and not only wrong planning, but also wrong definition of the relation between the forces of our class and of those classes with which, either in collaboration or sometimes even in conflict, it had to decide the fate of the republic. Starting from this point of view, we must turn to a summary of our experiences, to our political experience, to what the C.C., since it guided policy, must make clear to itself and try to make clear to the whole Party. These are phenomena so diverse as the progress of our war against Poland and our food and fuel problems. Our offensive, our too rapid advance almost up to Warsaw, was undoubtedly a mistake. I will not now go into the question whether this was a strategical or a political mistake, as this would carry me too far—I think that this should be a subject for future historians; those who have to continue to beat off enemies in arduous struggle have no time to engage

in historical research. At all events, the mistake was committed, and this mistake was due to our overestimating our superiority of forces. It would be too complicated a task to go into the question of the extent to which our superiority of forces was determined by economic conditions, the extent to which it was determined by the fact that the war against Poland roused patriotic sentiments even among petty-bourgeois elements, not in the least proletarian, who did not at all sympathise with Communism, who did not absolutely support the dictatorship of the proletariat—and sometimes, it must be said, did not support it at all; a number of elements played a part in this, and so we had a certain superiority of forces.

But the fact is that we committed a certain mistake in the war against Poland.

And if we take a sphere of work such as food, we will see an analogous mistake. In regard to the food quotas and their fulfilment, the year under review has been incomparably more favourable than the preceding one. This year the amount of grain collected exceeded 250,000,000 poods. On February 1, it was calculated that we had collected 235,000,000 poods, whereas for the whole of last year only 210,000,000 poods were collected; that is to say, more has been collected in a much shorter period this year than was collected during the whole of last year. But it turned out that of the 235,000,000 poods of grain collected by February 1, we expended about 155,000,000 poods in the first half-year, that is, an average of 25,000,000 poods, or even more, per month. In general, of course, we must admit that we did not succeed in distributing our resources properly when they turned out to be larger than those of last year. We did not succeed in properly appraising the whole danger of the crisis that was approaching in the spring, and we yielded to the natural striving to increase the ration of the starving workers. Here too it must be said that we lacked data for our calculations. In all capitalist countries, notwithstanding the anarchy, notwithstanding the chaos inherent in capitalism, the data for calculating the economic plan are the decades of experience which capitalist countries, whose economic systems are identical, and differ from each other only in certain particulars, can compare. From this comparison it is possible

to deduce the genuinely scientific law, a certain system and rule. We had no such experience to go by for our calculations, nor could we have; and quite naturally, when, on the conclusion of the war, the opportunity at last occurred of giving a little more to the starving population, we could not immediately determine the proper measure. Clearly, we should not have increased the ration so much and should have saved some of it to create a reserve fund for the rainy day that had to come, and did come, in the spring. This we did not do. Again we made a mistake, a mistake of a kind that is characteristic of the whole of our work—a mistake which shows that the transition from war to peace confronted us with a number of problems and difficulties for the solution of which we had neither the experience, the training, nor the materials; and the result was an extreme intensification, sharpening and worsening of the crisis.

Something analogous to this undoubtedly occurred with fuel. This is the fundamental question of economic construction. The whole transition from war to peace, to economic construction—which was discussed at the last Party congress, and which has been the principal object of our care and attention, of our whole policy, during the year under review—all this, of course, could not but be based on a calculation of the output of fuel and of its proper distribution. Without this there could be no thought of overcoming difficulties, or of restoring industry. That in this respect we are now in a better position than we were last year is clear. Before we were cut off from the coal and oil regions. After the victories of the Red Army we obtained coal and oil. At all events, our fuel resources were increased. We know that the fuel resources with which we started the year under review were larger than those we had before. And in connection with the increase of our fuel resources we also committed a mistake by immediately distributing fuel so widely that these resources became exhausted, and we found ourselves confronted by a fuel crisis before we had properly organised all the work. Special reports will be made here on all these questions, and I cannot even approximately submit to you all the data available on this question. At all events, taking into account the experience of the past, we must say that the mistake is due to our wrong impression of the state of things and the rapid

transition from war to peace. It turned out that this transition was possible much more slowly than we imagined. Much more prolonged preparation, a slower tempo is needed—that is the lesson we have learned during the past year, a lesson which the Party as a whole will have to learn very very thoroughly in order to determine our fundamental tasks for the coming year, and in order to avoid such mistakes in the future.

Undoubtedly, we must say in this connection that these mistakes, and particularly the crises that followed from these mistakes, were rendered more acute by the failure of the harvest. Although I said that our work in the food sphere during the year under review has brought us incomparably better food resources than we have had in the past, it must be said that here, too, lay one of the principal sources of the crises; for, owing to the failure of the harvest, which caused an enormous shortage of cattle feed, the dying off of cattle and the ruin of peasant farming, the collection of the food quotas was concentrated in districts where the food surpluses were not very large. The food surpluses were much larger in various outlying regions of the republic—Siberia, North Caucasus—but it was precisely in these regions where the Soviet apparatus was least organised, where the Soviet government was least stable, and from which it was most difficult to transport food. That is why we obtained our increased food resources from the least fertile gubernias, and this rendered the peasant farming crisis very much more acute.

Here again we clearly see that we lacked proper accounting. On the other hand, we were in such a tight fix that we had no choice. A country which after a ruinous imperialist war had undergone several years of civil war could not exist, of course, except by concentrating all its efforts on supplying the needs of the front. And, of course, ruined as it was, the country could not do anything else but take the surplus grain from the peasants even though it did not compensate them in any way. It was necessary to do this in order to save the country, the army, and the workers' and peasants' government. We said to the peasants: "Of course, you are loaning your grain to the workers' and peasants' state; but you cannot save your state from the landlords and capitalists in any other way."

We could not act otherwise under the conditions which the imperialists and capitalists imposed upon us by their war. We had no other choice. But these circumstances brought us to the position that, after a war that had lasted so long, peasant farming had so deteriorated that the harvest failed—as a result of the diminution of the sown area, as a result of the deterioration of the means of production, as a result of the decline in the yield, as a result of the shortage of labour, etc. The failure of the harvest was enormous, and the collection of the surplus food stocks, which after all turned out to be much better than we expected, was accompanied by such an intensification of the crisis as will, perhaps, give rise to even greater difficulties and suffering for us in the forthcoming months. This circumstance must be carefully weighed in analysing what we have experienced in politics during the year under review, and what political tasks we must set ourselves in the new year. The year under review has bequeathed to the coming year the very same urgent tasks.

Now I will take up another point from an altogether different sphere, namely, the discussion on the trade unions which took up so much of the Party's time. I have had occasion to speak of this already today, and, of course, I could only say cautiously that probably there are not many among you who do not regard this discussion as having been an excessive luxury. Speaking for myself, I cannot but add that in my opinion this luxury was really absolutely impermissible; by permitting such a discussion we undoubtedly made a mistake and failed to see that in this discussion a question came to the forefront which, because of the objective conditions, should not have been in the forefront; we wallowed in luxury and failed to see to what an extent we were distracting attention from the urgent and menacing question of this very crisis that confronted us so closely. What are the real results of this discussion, which lasted so many months, and probably wearied the majority of you present here? You will hear special reports on this, but in my report I would like to draw your attention to one aspect of the matter, namely, that here a certain proverb was undoubtedly proved to be correct: "It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good."

Unfortunately, there was a little too much ill and much too little good. (Laughter.) But there was some good, and that was that, having lost time, having distracted the attention of our Party comrades from the urgent task of combating the petty-bourgeois elemental forces that surround us, we nevertheless learned to recognise certain interrelationships which formerly we did not see. The good was that the Party could not but learn something in that struggle. Although we all knew that as a ruling party we could not but merge the Soviet "upper ranks" with the Party "upper ranks"—they are and will be merged—nevertheless, the Party received a lesson in this discussion which must be learned. Some platforms received the votes of mainly the "upper ranks" of the Party. The platforms, which were sometimes called the platforms of the "Workers' Opposition" and sometimes something else, turned out to represent an obviously syndicalist deviation. This is not merely my opinion, but the opinion of the overwhelming majority of those present here. [*Voices: "Quite right!"*]

In this discussion, the Party proved itself to be so mature that, seeing a certain wavering among the "upper ranks," hearing the "upper ranks" saying as it were, "We cannot agree, sort us out," it quickly mobilised itself for this task, and the overwhelming majority of the larger Party organisations quickly answered us, "We have an opinion and we shall tell you what it is."

In this discussion we had a number of platforms. There were so many that, I am afraid, even I, whose duty it was to read them *ex officio*, did not read them all. I do not know whether all of you here present had the time to read them; at all events it must be said that the syndicalist and to a certain degree even semi-anarchist deviation which became revealed provides much food for reflection. For several months we wallowed in luxury to such an extent that we became absorbed in the study of shades of opinion. Meanwhile, the demobilisation of the army gave rise to banditism and intensified the economic crisis. This discussion should have helped us to understand that our Party, as a party which has reached a membership of roughly not less than half a million, and even exceeds half a million, has become firstly, a mass party, and secondly a government party, and that being a mass party it partly reflects

something that takes place outside of its ranks. It is very very important to understand this.

A slight syndicalist or semi-anarchist deviation would not have been terrible; the Party would have quickly and resolutely recognised it and would have set to work to straighten it out. But when this deviation is connected with the overwhelming preponderance of the peasantry in the country, when the discontent of this peasantry with the proletarian dictatorship is growing, when the crisis of peasant farming is reaching the limit, when the demobilisation of the peasant army is throwing out hundreds and thousands of broken men who cannot find work, who have been accustomed to engage in war as their only trade, and who give rise to banditism—there is no time to argue about theoretical deviations. And we must bluntly say at the congress: We will not permit arguments about deviations, we must put a stop to this. The Party congress can and must do this; it must draw the proper lesson from this and add it to the political report of the C.C., fix it, seal it and transform it into an obligation for the Party, into a law. The controversial atmosphere is becoming extremely dangerous, it is becoming a positive menace to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Some comrades, whom I had occasion to meet and argue with during the discussion, when, several months ago, I said, "Look out, the rule of the working class and the dictatorship of the working class are in danger," said: "You are trying to frighten us; you are intimidating us." I have had these labels—that I intimidate people—attached to my remarks on several occasions, and I replied that it would be ridiculous for me to attempt to intimidate old revolutionaries who have gone through all sorts of trials. But when you see the difficulties of demobilisation unfolding before you, you cannot deny that not only was there no intimidation but even none of the harshness inevitable in controversies; there was an absolutely precise reference to what had come about, to the need for solidarity, restraint and discipline, not only because the proletarian party could not work in harmony without this, but because the spring was bringing such difficult conditions as would make it impossible to operate without the maximum of solidarity. I think that we shall be able to draw these two main lessons from the

discussion. And that is why it seems to me that we must say that although we indulged in luxury for a while and presented to the world the astonishing spectacle of a party placed in the most difficult position of having to wage a desperate struggle concentrating unparalleled attention on the detailed elucidation of certain details of platforms—and that in the midst of famine and crisis, in the midst of ruin and demobilisation—we shall now draw a political conclusion from these lessons; not only a conclusion pointing to this or that mistake, but a political conclusion concerning the relations between classes, between the working class and the peasantry. These relations are not those we thought they were. These relations demand that the proletariat display immeasurably greater solidarity and concentration of forces, and these relations, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, are many times more dangerous than all the Denikins, Kolchaks and Yudeniches put together. There must be no mistake about this, for it would be fatal! The difficulties arising from the petty-bourgeois elemental forces are enormous, and in order to overcome them we need great solidarity—not only formal solidarity—but unanimous team work, a single will; because only with such a will of the proletarian masses can the proletariat in a peasant country fulfil the gigantic tasks of its dictatorship and leadership.

Assistance from the West European countries is coming, but it is not coming so quickly. It is coming and growing.

At the morning session I stated that one of the most important factors in the period under review (this is also closely connected with the activities of the C.C.) is the organisation of the Second Congress of the Communist International. Of course, the international revolution has now taken a big stride forward compared with the position last year. Of course, the Communist International, which at the time of our congress last year only existed in the form of manifestoes, has now begun to exist as an independent party in every country, and not only as an advanced party—Communism has become the central question of the entire labour movement. In Germany, France and Italy the Communist International has not only become the centre of the labour movement, but the focus of attention of the whole political life of these countries. Last autumn

it was impossible to take up a German or French newspaper without reading abuse of Moscow and the Bolsheviks, without reading adjectives and superlatives about us, and without reading about how the Bolsheviks and the twenty-one conditions of affiliation to the Third International were becoming the central question in the whole of their political life. This is our gain, and no one can deprive us of it! This shows that the international revolution is growing, and parallel with it the economic crisis in Europe is becoming more acute. At all events, if from this we assumed that, in general, assistance will shortly come from there in the form of a stable proletarian revolution, we would simply be mad, and I am sure there is no one like that in this hall. During the past three years we have learned to understand that banking on an international revolution does not mean calculating on a definite date, and that the rate of development, which is becoming faster and faster, may bring revolution in the spring, but on the other hand it may not. And that is why we must be able to co-ordinate our activities with the class relationships in our country and in other countries in order that we may be able to maintain the dictatorship of the proletariat for a long period and remedy, if only gradually, all the misfortunes and crises which have befallen us. Only such a presentation of the question will be a correct and sober one.

Now I come to a point which concerns the activities of the C.C. during the current year, and which comes close to the tasks confronting us: this is the question of our foreign relations.

Before the Ninth Congress of the Party, all our attention and all our efforts were devoted to securing a transition from the relations of war with the capitalist countries to the relations of peace and trade. For this purpose, we took all sorts of diplomatic steps and proved victorious over undoubtedly big diplomats. When, for example, the representatives of America, or the representatives of the League of Nations, proposed that we cease military operations against Denikin and Kolchak on certain terms they thought they would embarrass us. As a matter of fact it was they who were embarrassed, and we won a great diplomatic victory. They looked foolish and were compelled to withdraw their terms; later on this was exposed in the whole of diplomatic literature and in the press

of the whole world. But a diplomatic victory is not enough for us; we cannot be content with that. We need real commercial relations, and not merely diplomatic victories. It was only in the course of the year under review that commercial relations began to develop somewhat. The question of commercial relations with Great Britain arose. This has been the central point since the summer of last year. The war against Poland threw us back a long way in this respect. Great Britain was already prepared to sign a trade agreement. The British bourgeoisie wanted this agreement, but British court circles did not want it and hindered the negotiations; the war against Poland put off the signing of the agreement; and so the position is that no agreement has been signed yet.

It was reported in the newspapers today that Krassin in London informed the press that he expected a trade agreement to be signed very soon. I do not know whether the realisation of this hope is fully assured. I cannot decide whether it will really happen so, but I, for my part, must say that we on the C.C. attached enormous importance to this question and considered it right to adopt yielding tactics in order to secure a trade agreement with Great Britain.

Connected with this is the question of concessions. We have dealt with this question more this year than we have done before. On November 23, the decree of the Council of People's Commissars was issued which dealt with the question of concessions in a form most acceptable to foreign capitalists. When certain misunderstandings, or incomplete understanding, arose on this question in Party circles, a number of meetings of responsible workers were held at which this question was discussed.¹

On the whole, it did not give rise to disagreements, although we heard not a few protests from workers and peasants. They said: "We expelled our own capitalists and now they want to call in the foreign capitalists." Of course, the C.C. has no statistical data to show to what extent these protests were the result of ignorance and to what extent they reflected the calculations of the kulak or out-and-out capitalist section of the non-party people who believe that they have a legitimate right to be capitalists in Russia, and cap-

¹ See "Speech at a Meeting of Secretaries of Nuclei of the Moscow Organisation of the R.C.P., November 26, 1920," *Selected Works*, Vol. VIII.—Ed.

italists with power at that, and that foreign capitalists should not be invited even without power. Of course, the C.C. has no statistical data to show which of these factors operated, and, in general, it is hardly likely that any statistics in the world could calculate and explain this. At all events, with this decree we have taken a step towards the establishment of concession relations. It must be said that actually—and this must never be forgotten—we have not succeeded in placing a single concession. There is a dispute among us about whether we should try to place concessions at all costs. Whether we succeed in doing so or not will not be decided by our disputes and decisions, but by international capital. On February 1 of this year, the Council of People's Commissars adopted another decision on the question of concessions. The first point of this decision reads: "To approve in principle the granting of oil concessions in Grozny, Baku and other functioning oilfields, and to start negotiations, which shall be expedited."

This question did not pass off without a certain amount of controversy. Some comrades thought that the granting of concessions in Grozny and Baku was wrong and was likely to rouse opposition among the workers. The majority of the C.C., and I personally, adopted the point of view that probably there was no real cause for these complaints.

The majority of the Central Committee, and I personally, adopted the point of view that these concessions are necessary, and we shall ask you to support this point of view with your authority. This union with the state trusts of the advanced countries is absolutely essential for us owing to the fact that our economic crisis is so profound that we shall be unable to restore our ruined economy by our own efforts, without equipment and technical assistance from abroad. Merely importing this equipment is not sufficient. We can grant concessions on a wider basis, perhaps, to the biggest imperialist syndicates: a fourth of Baku, a fourth of Grozny, a fourth of our best forest lands, in order to secure the necessary basis by the installation of the latest technical equipment; in return for this we shall get the equipment that we require for the other parts. Thus we can at least catch up a little, if only a fourth or a half, with the modern, advanced syndicates of other countries.

No one who contemplates our present position at all soberly can have any doubt whatever that without this we shall find ourselves in a very difficult position, and that we shall never catch up with them without the tremendous exertion of all our efforts. Negotiations have already started with some of the biggest world trusts. On their part, of course, it is not merely rendering a service to us: they are simply doing it for the sake of unlimited profits. Speaking in the language of the peaceful diplomats, modern capitalism is a pirate, a piratical trust, it is not the capitalism of the former normal epoch; taking advantage of its monopolist position in the world market, it scoops in hundreds per cent of profit. Of course, we shall have to pay a heavy price for this thing, but we have no alternative, since we are compelled to wait for the world revolution. There is no other way open to us of raising our technique to the modern level.

On February 1, 1921, the Council of People's Commissars decided to purchase abroad 18,500,000 poods of coal, because at that time our fuel crisis had already become evident. It also became evident then that we shall have to spend our gold fund on something else besides equipment. The latter would increase our coal output, and we could manage better if we purchased machinery abroad for developing our coal industry than if we purchased coal; but the crisis proved to be so acute that it was found necessary to abandon this economically more expedient policy and adopt the worse one of spending our resources on purchasing coal, which we could obtain at home. We shall have to agree to even greater concessions in order to purchase consumers' goods for the peasants and workers.

Now I want to deal with the events in Kronstadt. I have not yet received the latest news from Kronstadt, but I have no doubt that this mutiny, which quickly revealed the familiar figures of the White Guard generals, will be liquidated within the next few days, if not within the next few hours. There can be no doubt about this. But we must weigh up in detail the political and economic lessons of this event.

What does this event signify? The transfer of political power from the hands of the Bolsheviks to a vague conglomeration, or alliance, of heterogeneous elements who seem to be even only a

little to the Right of the Bolsheviks, and perhaps even to the "Left" of the Bolsheviks—so indefinite is the sum of political groupings which tried to seize power in Kronstadt. Undoubtedly, at the same time, White generals—you all know it—played a great part in this. This is fully proved. The Paris newspapers reported a mutiny in Kronstadt two weeks before the events in Kronstadt took place. It is absolutely clear that this is the work of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and of the White Guards abroad; at the same time, the movement amounted to a petty-bourgeois counter-revolution, an outburst of the petty-bourgeois, anarchist element. This is something new. This circumstance, in connection with all the crises, must be carefully weighed up politically and examined in detail. Here became revealed the petty-bourgeois, democratic element, with the slogans of free trade, all directed against the dictatorship of the Bolsheviks. And this mood has very widely affected the proletariat. Its effects were felt in the Moscow factories, and in the factories in a number of places in the provinces. This petty-bourgeois counter-revolution is undoubtedly more dangerous than Denikin, Yudenich and Kolchak put together, because we have to deal with a country in which the proletariat is in the minority, we have to deal with a country in which peasant property has been afflicted with ruin, and, moreover, we also have such a thing as the demobilisation of the army, which created an incredible number of insurgent elements. Small as this—what shall we call it?—shifting of power which the Kronstadt sailors and workers demanded may have been at first—they wanted to put the Bolsheviks right on the question of free trade (not an important shift, one would think; the slogan seems to be the same: "Soviet power," slightly altered, or only corrected)—nevertheless, the non-party elements served merely as a foothold, a step, a bridge for the White Guards. Politically, this was inevitable. We have seen the petty-bourgeois anarchist elements in the Russian revolution, we have fought them for decades. Since February 1917 we have seen these petty-bourgeois elements in action during the great revolution, and we have seen the attempts of the petty-bourgeois parties to declare that in their programmes they differ very little from the Bolsheviks, only that they carry out their programmes by different methods. We know this not only

from the experience of the October Revolution, but also from the experience of the border regions, the various regions which were formerly part of the Russian Empire, and in which the representatives of another power have taken the place of the Soviet power. Recall the Democratic Committee in Samara. All of them came forward with the slogans of equality, liberty and the Constituent Assembly, and not once, but many times, they turned out to be simply a step, or a bridge, by which the White Guards could come into power. And from all this experience we must draw all the conclusions which are theoretically inevitable for a Marxist, because owing to the economic situation the Soviet power is shaking. The experience of the whole of Europe shows in practice what the attempt to sit between two stools ends in. That is why it is precisely in this case that we must say that political friction is a very serious danger. We must watch very closely the petty-bourgeois counter-revolution which is advancing the slogan of free trade.

Free trade, even if at first it is not so closely linked up with the White Guards as Kronstadt was, will nevertheless inevitably lead to the rule of the White Guards, to the victory of capital, to complete restoration. And, I repeat, we must clearly realise this political danger.

This danger proves what I said when I spoke about our disputes over platforms;¹ in face of this danger, we must understand that we must put a stop to Party disputes; not only formally—that, of course, we will do—but that is not enough! We must remember that we must approach this question much more seriously.

We must understand that in the midst of the crisis of peasant economy we cannot exist unless we appeal to this peasant economy to help town and country. We must remember that the bourgeoisie is striving to rouse the peasantry against the workers, is striving to rouse the petty-bourgeois anarchist element against the workers by means of workers' slogans, that this will lead directly to the overthrow of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and consequently to the restoration of capitalism, to the restoration of the old landlord and capitalist rule. Here the political danger is evident. This path has been traversed most distinctly by a number of revolutions,

¹ See pp. 91-93.—*Ed.*

it is the path we have always pointed to. This path now clearly stands before us. It undoubtedly demands of the governing Party of Communists, of the leading revolutionary elements of the proletariat, something different from the attitude we often displayed during the past year; this danger undoubtedly demands greater solidarity, greater discipline, greater team work! Without this it will be impossible to cope with the dangers which fate has brought us.

Then follow economic problems. What is the significance of the slogan of free trade which the petty-bourgeois element has brought to the front? It shows that in the relations between the proletariat and the small tillers of the soil there are difficult problems, difficult tasks that we have not yet solved. I refer to the relations between the victorious proletariat and the small proprietors at a time when the proletarian revolution is sweeping a country in which the proletariat is in the minority and the petty bourgeoisie is in the majority. The role of the proletariat in such a country is to guide these small proprietors towards socialised, collective, communal labour. There can be no doubt about this theoretically. We dealt with this transition in a number of legislative acts; but we know that it is not a matter of passing laws, but of carrying them out in practice, and we know that this can be done when we have a powerful, large-scale industry capable of bringing the small producer such benefits as will enable him to see in practice the superiority of large-scale economy.

This is how all Marxists and all Socialists who have pondered over the social revolution and its tasks have always presented the problem theoretically; and in our country the first specific feature is the one I have mentioned, and which is characteristic of Russia to the utmost degree: the proletariat is not only in the minority, but in a small minority, while the peasants are in the overwhelming majority. And the conditions under which we had to defend the revolution made the solution of our problems unprecedentedly difficult. We could not demonstrate the superiority of large-scale production in practice, because this large-scale production has been destroyed, it is itself dragging out a miserable existence and can be restored only if sacrifices are imposed upon the small tillers of the soil. Industry must be raised, but for this purpose we need fuel, and since we need fuel we must calculate on wood fuel, and

calculating on wood fuel means calculating on the peasant and on his horse. In the midst of the crisis, of lack of fodder and the dying of cattle, the peasant must advance credits to the Soviet government for the sake of large-scale industry from which he is getting nothing as yet. This is the economic situation which creates enormous difficulties, this is the economic situation which compels us to ponder more deeply over the conditions of transition from war to peace. During the war we could not manage in any other way except by saying to the peasant, "You must grant a loan to the workers' and peasants' state to help it out of a difficult position." While concentrating all our attention on restoring our economy, we must bear in mind that we have before us the small tiller of the soil, the small proprietor, the small producer, producing for commodity circulation, until the complete victory of large-scale industry, its restoration, is achieved. But this restoration cannot be achieved on the old basis: it is a work of many years, not less than a decade, and in view of the ruined state of our country perhaps even longer. Meanwhile, for many years we shall have to deal with this small producer as such, and the free trade slogan will be inevitable. The danger of this slogan does not lie in the fact that it conceals White Guard and Menshevik strivings, but in that it may become widespread, notwithstanding the hatred these very peasants entertain towards the White Guards. It will become widespread because it answers to the economic conditions of existence of the small producer. It was for these reasons that the C.C. adopted a decision and started a discussion on the question of substituting a tax for the food quotas and openly raised this question at the congress today, which you have approved by the decision you passed today. The question of the tax and quota was raised long ago, as far back as the end of 1918. The tax law is dated October 30, 1918. This law, which introduced the tax in kind on the tillers of the soil, was adopted, but was not put into force. Several months after it was passed, several instructions were sent out and it remained in abeyance. On the other hand, the taking of surplus grain from the peasant farms was a measure which, owing to war conditions, was imposed upon us by absolute necessity, but which does not answer the requirements of anything like peaceful conditions of existence of peasant farming. The latter

needs the assurance that it will have to give a certain amount and that it will be able to use a certain amount for its own local turnover.

All our economy, as a whole and in its various parts, has been thoroughly steeped in wartime conditions. Taking these conditions into account, we had to set ourselves the task of collecting a definite quantity of provisions, without giving any consideration whatever to the place it will take in social turnover. Now that we are passing from war problems to peace problems we are beginning to look differently upon the tax in kind: we look upon it not only from the point of view of the security of the state, but also from the point of view of the security of the small farms. We must understand the economic forms of the resentment of the petty agricultural element against the proletariat which have revealed themselves, and which are becoming more acute in the present crisis. We must try to do all we possibly can in this connection. The most important thing for us is to give the peasant a certain amount of freedom in local turnover, to transform quotas into a tax, in order that the small proprietor may be able to calculate his production better and to fix the dimensions of his production in accordance with the tax. We know, of course, that it is very difficult to achieve this in the circumstances which surround us. The area under cultivation, the yield and means of production have all diminished, and surplus stocks have undoubtedly been reduced; in many cases they have disappeared entirely. We must recognise that these conditions exist in fact. The peasant must go hungry a little in order to relieve the factories and towns from absolute starvation. This is quite intelligible from a national, state point of view, but we do not expect the scattered, impoverished, peasant proprietor to understand this. We know that we shall not be able to dispense with coercion, against which the ruined peasantry reacts very strongly. Nor must we think that this measure will rid us of the crisis. At the same time, however, we are setting ourselves the task of making the maximum concessions in order to create the best conditions in which the small producer can display his efforts. Up to now we have been adapting ourselves to the problems of war. Now we must adapt ourselves to the conditions of peace. This task has come before the C.C.—the task of passing

to the tax in kind under a proletarian government, and this is closely connected with concessions. We shall discuss this task separately, for it demands special attention.¹ By means of concessions the proletarian government may secure an agreement with the capitalist states of the advanced countries; and the strengthening of our industry, without which we can make no progress on the road to the Communist system, depends on our securing this agreement. On the other hand, in this transition period, in a country in which the peasantry predominates, we must be able to adopt measures for the economic security of the peasantry, adopt the maximum of measures to relieve their economic position. So long as we have not yet remoulded them, so long as large-scale machine production has not remoulded them, we must ensure them the opportunity of freely carrying on their business. The position in which we find ourselves at present is an intermediary one, our revolution exists in an environment of capitalist countries. As long as we are in this intermediary position we are compelled to seek extremely complicated forms of interrelations. Overburdened with war, we could not concentrate our attention on arranging the economic relations of the proletarian state—which owns an incredibly ruined large-scale industry—on seeking forms of cohabitation with the small tillers, who, as long as they remain small tillers, cannot exist unless their small farms are assured of a certain system of turnover. I consider this question to be the most important economic and political question confronting the Soviet government at the present time. I believe that this question sums up the political results of our work at the close of the war period and the beginning of the transition to a peace position that was made in the year under review.

This transition is connected with such difficulties, it has so strikingly revealed the petty-bourgeois element, that we must examine the latter very soberly. We regard this series of phenomena from the point of view of the class struggle. We never had any illusions about the relations between the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie being a very difficult problem, one demanding complicated measures, or, rather, a whole system of complicated transitional meas-

¹ See "The Tax in Kind," in this volume.—*Ed.*

ures, to ensure the victory of the proletarian power. The fact that we issued the decree on the tax in kind at the end of 1918 shows that this question was appreciated by the Communists, but that we could not put the decree into force owing to the wartime conditions. In the midst of civil war we were compelled to adopt wartime measures; but it would be a great mistake if we drew the conclusion from this that only such measures and relations are possible. That would certainly mean the collapse of the Soviet government and of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Since the transition to peace is taking place in the midst of an economic crisis, we must remember that it is easier to build up the proletarian state in a land of large-scale production than in one in which small production predominates. This task calls for several ways of approach. We do not in the least close our eyes to these difficulties, nor forget that the proletariat is one thing and small production is another. We do not forget that there are various classes, that the petty-bourgeois anarchist counter-revolution is a political stage leading to White Guard rule. We must look at this squarely and soberly, and recognise that what is necessary here is the utmost solidarity, endurance and discipline within the proletarian party, on the one hand, and a number of economic measures which we were not able to carry out up to now owing to the war conditions, on the other. We must recognise the need for concessions, for purchasing machines and equipment for our agriculture, in order, by giving these in exchange for grain, to restore such relations between the proletariat and the peasantry as will ensure its existence in peacetime conditions. I hope to return to this question later, and I repeat that in my opinion we are now dealing with a very important question. The past year, which must be described as the transition from war to peace, has confronted us with extremely difficult tasks.

In conclusion, I will say just a few words about the question of the struggle against bureaucracy which has taken up so much of our time. This question was raised on the C.C. as far back as the summer of last year, and in August the C.C. brought it up in its letter to all the organisations. In September it was brought up at the Party conference, and finally at the December Congress of

Soviets¹ it was brought up on a wider scale. The ulcer of bureaucracy undoubtedly exists; it is admitted, and a real struggle must be waged against it. Of course, in the discussion which we witnessed, in several of the platforms, this question was presented in a manner which, to say the least, was frivolous, and often it was regarded from the petty-bourgeois point of view. Undoubtedly, ferment and discontent have been revealed among the non-party workers lately. At the non-party meetings that were held in Moscow, it was quite evident that they were transforming democracy, liberty, into a slogan that led to the overthrow of the Soviet power. Many, or at all events several, of the representatives of the "Workers' Opposition" fought against this evil, against this petty-bourgeois counter-revolution, and said, "We will rally against this." And indeed, they succeeded in displaying the utmost solidarity. I do not know whether all the adherents of the "Workers' Opposition" group, and other groups with semi-syndicalist programmes, are like that. We must learn more about this at this congress, we must realise that the fight against bureaucracy is absolutely necessary and that it is as complicated a task as that of fighting against the petty-bourgeois element. Bureaucracy in our state system has become such a sore that we speak about it in our Party programme, and this is because it is connected with this petty-bourgeois element and its diffuseness. This sore can be removed only by the unity of the toilers, by the toilers not only being able to welcome the decrees of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection—are not sufficient decrees welcomed?—but by being able, through the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, to exercise their rights, which at present is not the case, not only in the villages, but even in the towns, and even in the capital cities! Often they are not able to exercise their rights even where the loudest protests are made against bureaucracy. It is extremely necessary to pay attention to this.

Here we often observe how some, in fighting against this evil, want, sincerely perhaps, to help the proletarian party, the prole-

¹ See "Report on the Activities of the Council of People's Commissars at the Eighth Congress of Soviets, December 22, 1920," *Selected Works* vol. VIII. *Ed.*

tarian dictatorship, the proletarian movement, but in fact are helping the petty-bourgeois, anarchist element, which more than once in the course of the revolution has manifested itself as the most dangerous enemy of the proletarian dictatorship. And now—this is the fundamental conclusion to be drawn and lesson to be learnt from the present year—it has again revealed itself as the most dangerous enemy, which is most capable of gaining adherents and support in a country like ours, able to change the mood of the broad masses and to affect even a section of the non-party workers. Under these circumstances, the position of the proletarian state becomes a very difficult one. Unless we understand this, unless we learn this lesson and make this congress mark a turning point in economic policy, and also in securing the utmost solidarity of the proletariat, the sad words that we have not forgotten the empty and petty things that we should have forgotten, and have not learnt the serious things that the past year of the revolution should have taught us, will have to be applied to us. I hope this will not be the case!

THE TAX IN KIND

*Report Delivered at the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.),
March 15, 1921*

COMRADES, the question of substituting a tax for the food quotas is first of all, and most of all, a political question, because the essence of this question is the relations between the working class and the peasantry. The fact that this question is being raised implies that we must subject the relations between these two main classes, the struggle or agreement between which determines the fate of our whole revolution, to a new, or I should say, perhaps, a more careful and correct supplementary examination and to a certain amount of revision. There is no need for me to deal in detail with the question of why such a re-examination is necessary. All of you know perfectly well, of course, what a sum of events—arising particularly from the extremely acute want caused by the war, ruin, demobilisation, and the very severe failure of the harvest—what a sum of circumstances have caused the position of the peasantry to become particularly hard and acute and inevitably increased its vacillation from the proletariat towards the bourgeoisie.

A word or two about the theoretical significance of or the theoretical approach to this question. There is no doubt that it is possible to carry out the socialist revolution in a country in which the small farmer producers constitute the overwhelming majority of the population only by means of a number of special transitional measures which would be totally unnecessary in countries with developed capitalism, countries in which wage workers constitute the overwhelming majority in industry and agriculture. In the lands of developed capitalism there is a class of agricultural

wage workers which grew up in the course of decades. Only such a class can socially, economically and politically, serve as a support for the direct transition to Socialism. Only in countries where this class is sufficiently developed is the direct transition from capitalism to Socialism possible without special transitional nation-wide measures. In a number of our writings, in all our speeches, and in the whole of our press, we have emphasised that this is not the position in Russia, that in Russia the industrial workers are in the minority, and that the small farmers are in the overwhelming majority. In such a country the Socialist revolution can be completely successful only on two conditions: first, on the condition that it receives timely support from the Socialist revolution in one or several advanced countries. As you know, we have done ever so much more than before to achieve this condition, but we have done far from enough to bring it about.

The other condition is the agreement between the proletariat, which is realising its dictatorship, or which holds political power, and the majority of the peasant population. This agreement is a very broad concept and embodies a number of measures and stages. Here it must be said that in the whole of our propaganda and agitation we must make this absolutely plain. In our midst, those who by politics mean petty devices which sometimes are almost on a par with deception should be very strongly condemned. Their mistakes must be rectified. Classes cannot be deceived. We have done a great deal during the past three years to raise the political consciousness of the masses. The masses learnt most from the acute struggle. In accordance with our world outlook, with our decades of revolutionary experience and the lessons of our revolution, we must raise questions bluntly: the interests of these two classes differ; the small farmer does not want what the worker wants.

We know that only agreement with the peasantry can save the Socialist revolution in Russia until the revolution in other countries takes place. And that is how we must put it, bluntly, at all meetings and in the whole of our press. We know that this agreement between the working class and the peasantry is precarious, to put it mildly—please do not put the word “mildly” in the minutes—and speaking straightforwardly, it is much worse. At all events,

we must not try to conceal anything, but must say straightforwardly that the peasantry are not satisfied with the form of relationships that has been established with them, that they do not want this form of relationships and will not tolerate it any longer. This is indisputable. They have definitely expressed this will; it is the will of the vast mass of the toiling population. We must reckon with this; and we are sufficiently level-headed politicians to be able to say straightforwardly: Let us reconsider our policy towards the peasantry. The position that has existed up to now cannot be maintained any longer.

We must say to the peasants: "Do you want to go back, do you want to restore private property and free trade entirely? If you do, it means unavoidably and inevitably slipping back to the rule of the landlords and the capitalists. A number of historical examples, and the examples of revolutions, testify to this. Quite short passages from the A B C of Communism, from the A B C of political economy, will corroborate this inevitability. Let us examine the question. Would it pay the peasantry to fall out with the proletariat and so roll back—and allow the country to roll back—to the power of the capitalists and landlords? Weigh it up, and let us weigh it up together."

We think that if the matter is weighed up properly, in spite of the admittedly profound difference between the economic interests of the proletariat and those of the small farmers, the result will be in our favour.

Difficult as our position may be as far as resources are concerned, the problem of satisfying the middle peasants must be solved. The peasantry has become much more of a middle peasantry than before; antagonisms have been smoothed out, the land has been distributed and tenure is much more equal; the kulaks have been struck at the roots and to a large extent expropriated—in Russia more than in the Ukraine, and less in Siberia. Taken as a whole, however, statistics quite incontrovertibly show that the countryside has been levelled, smoothed out, *i.e.*, the sharp extremes of kulak and landless peasant have been smoothed out. All have become more equal; on the whole, the peasantry has reached the position of the middle peasant.

Can we satisfy this middle peasantry, as such, with its peculiar economic features, with its economic roots? If any Communist ever dreamt that it would be possible to transform the economic basis, the economic roots of the small farmer within three years, he was, of course, a fantasist; and—it is no use hiding the fact—we have had not a few fantasists in our midst. But there is nothing bad about that. How would it have been possible to start the socialist revolution in a country like this without fantasists? Of course, practice has shown what an enormous part all sorts of experiments and innovations can play in the sphere of collective agriculture. But practice has shown that these experiments, as such, also played a harmful part when people, filled with the best intentions and desires, went into the countryside to organise communes and collectives without the ability to organise, because they lacked collective experience.

The experience of these collective farms merely shows how not to organise: the surrounding peasantry jeer at or gloat over them. You know perfectly well how many examples of this kind there have been. I repeat that this is not surprising, because the transformation of the small farmer, the remoulding of his mentality and habits is a work of generations. Only a material base, technique, the employment of tractors and machinery in agriculture on a mass scale, electrification on a mass scale, can solve the problem of the small farmer, make his whole mentality sound, so to speak. This is what would radically, and with enormous rapidity, transform the small farmer. When I say it is a work of generations I do not mean that it is a work of centuries. You understand perfectly well that to provide tractors and machines, and to electrify an enormous country, must, at all events, take no less than decades. This is the objective situation.

We must try to satisfy the demands of the peasants who are dissatisfied, discontented, and legitimately discontented, and cannot be otherwise. We must say to them, "No, this situation cannot continue any longer." How can the peasant be satisfied, and what does satisfying him mean? Where can we find the reply to the question of how to satisfy him? From these very demands of the peasantry, of course. We know these demands. But we must

test them; we must examine from the point of view of economic science all that we know about the economic demands of the farmer. After studying the question we shall say to ourselves at once: In essence, the small farmer can be satisfied with two things. First of all, there must be a certain amount of freedom of turnover, of freedom for the small, private proprietor; and secondly, commodities and products must be provided. What is the use of freedom of turnover if there is nothing to turn over, freedom to trade if there is nothing to trade in? Without this it would be merely a scrap of paper; classes are not satisfied with scraps of paper, but with material things. These two conditions must be thoroughly understood. About the second condition, *i.e.*, how we are to provide commodities, whether we shall be able to provide them, we shall speak later. As for the first condition, *i.e.*, freedom of turnover, we must deal with it in detail.

What is freedom of turnover? Freedom of turnover is freedom to trade, and freedom to trade means going back to capitalism. Freedom of turnover and freedom to trade mean commodity exchange between individual, small proprietors. All of us who have learnt at least the A B C of Marxism know that this turnover and freedom to trade inevitably lead to the division of the commodity producers into owners of capital and owners of labour power, a division into capitalists and wage workers, *i.e.*, the restoration of capitalist wage slavery, which does not come like a bolt from the blue, but all over the world grows precisely out of commodity agriculture. We know this perfectly well, theoretically, and in Russia no one who has watched the life and economic conditions of the small farmer can have failed to observe this.

The question arises, can the Communist Party recognise, adopt free trade? Are there no irreconcilable contradictions here? To this we must reply that, of course, the practical solution of this problem is an extremely difficult one. I can foresee, and from conversations I have had with comrades I know, that the largest number of questions, legitimate and inevitable, that will arise on the preliminary draft, which has been distributed to you, of the proposal to substitute a tax for the food quotas will arise on the point that exchange is to be permitted within the limits of local

economic turnover. This is stated at the end of point 8. What does this mean? What are the limits? How can it be put into practice? If anyone believes he will get a reply to this question at this congress he is mistaken. We shall get the reply to this question from our legislation; our task is merely to lay down the line of principle, to advance the slogan. Our Party is a government party, and the decision the Party congress arrives at will be binding for the whole republic; here we must settle the principle of the question. We must settle the principle of the question and inform the peasants about it, because the sowing season is already upon us. And then we must set our whole apparatus going, all our theoretical forces, all our practical experience, in order to investigate how this is to be done. Can it be done, theoretically speaking, can we, to a certain extent, restore freedom to trade, freedom for capitalism for the small farmer, without at the same time cutting at the roots of the political power of the proletariat? Can it be done? It can, for the question is one of degree. If we were able to place at least a small quantity of goods in the hands of the state, in the hands of the proletariat, which possesses political power, and to put these goods into circulation, we would, as a state, add economic power to political power. By putting these goods into circulation we would stimulate small farming, which at the present time is frightfully crushed under the burden of the severe conditions of war and ruin, and under the burden of the impossibility of expanding small farming. As long as he remains small, the small farmer must have a stimulus, an impetus, something to rouse him, corresponding to his economic base, i.e., small, individual farming. We cannot get away from local free turnover in this case. If this turnover gives the state a minimum quantity of grain sufficient to meet the requirements of the cities, of the factories, of industry, in exchange for manufactured goods, then economic turnover will be restored in such a way that state power will remain in the hands of the proletariat and become stronger. The peasantry demands a practical demonstration of the ability of the workers who own the factories, the works, industry, to organise exchange with it. On the other hand, an immense agrarian country with bad means of communication, bound-

less spaces, different climates, different agricultural conditions, etc., inevitably presupposes a certain freedom of turnover for local agriculture and local industry, on a local scale. In this respect we made many mistakes; we went too far: we went too far along the road of nationalising trade and industry, of stopping local turnover. Was this a mistake? Undoubtedly.

In this connection we did much that was simply wrong, and it would be a great crime not to see and realise that we did not keep within proper limits, that we did not know how to keep within proper limits. Some of the things, however, we were compelled to do by necessity: up to now we have been living under such conditions of furious and incredibly severe war that we had no other alternative but to act in a wartime manner in the sphere of economics. The miracle was that a ruined country was able to hold out in such a war. This miracle did not come from heaven, it arose out of the economic interests of the working class and the peasantry, who performed this miracle by their mass enthusiasm; this miracle repulsed the landlords and the capitalists. At the same time, it is an undoubted fact, and we must reveal it in our agitation and propaganda, that we went further than was necessary theoretically and politically. We can permit a fair amount of free local turnover without destroying, but on the contrary strengthening, the political power of the proletariat. The question of how to do it is a practical question. It is my business to prove to you that, theoretically, it is conceivable. If the proletariat, which holds political power, possesses any resources, it can put them into circulation, and thus satisfy the middle peasant to a certain extent, satisfy him on the basis of local turnover.

Now a few words about local turnover. But first of all I want to touch on the question of co-operation. Of course, if local turnover exists, we shall want our co-operatives, which at the present moment are too restricted. Our programme emphasises the fact that the best distributing apparatus are the co-operatives left to us by capitalism, and that this apparatus must be preserved. This is stated in the programme. Have we done that? Far from enough, and partly not at all—again partly by mistake and partly owing to the necessities of the war. By producing economic-

ally superior elements, superior in economics, the co-operatives produce Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in politics. This is a chemical law, and nothing can be done about it! Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries are people who, consciously or unconsciously, restore capitalism and help the Yudeniches. This, too, is a law. We must fight them. *A guerre, comme à la guerre*: we had to defend ourselves, and we did so. But should we necessarily remain in the present position? No. And it would certainly be a mistake to tie our hands in this matter. That is why I am proposing a resolution on the co-operatives, a very short one; I will read it to you:

"Whereas the resolution of the Ninth Congress of the R.C.P. on the co-operatives is entirely based on the recognition of the principle of quotas, which are now to be superseded by the tax in kind, the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P. resolves:

"That this resolution be rescinded.

"The congress instructs the Central Committee to draw up and secure the adoption by the Party and Soviet institutions of orders to improve and develop the structure and activities of the co-operative societies in accordance with the programme of the R.C.P. and adapted to the substitution of the tax in kind for the quotas."

You will say that this is indefinite. That is true, and it is necessary that it be somewhat indefinite. Why is it necessary? Because in order to be quite definite we must know exactly what we shall do during the whole year. Who knows what we shall do? No one knows, nor can anyone know.

The resolution of the Ninth Congress ties our hands. It says, "subordinate to the Commissariat for Food." The Commissariat for Food is an excellent institution; but to subordinate the co-operatives to it and tie our hands in this way when we are re-examining our relations with the small farmer would mean politically committing an obvious mistake. We must instruct the newly-elected Central Committee to draft and lay down certain measures and amendments, to test the steps backward and forward that we are taking, *i.e.*, to what extent this should be done, how to safeguard political interests, how far to retreat in order to ease the situation, and how to test the results of experience. Speaking theoretically, we in this respect are standing before a number of transitional steps, transitional measures. One thing is clear to us, and that is that the resolution of the Ninth Congress

assumed that we would proceed along a straight line. It turned out, as it has always turned out throughout the history of revolutions, that we proceeded in zigzags. It would be a political mistake to tie our hands with such a resolution. In annulling this resolution we say that we must be guided by our programme, which emphasises the importance of the co-operative apparatus.

In rescinding the resolution we say: Adapt yourselves to the substitution of the tax for quotas. But when shall we do that? Not before the harvest, i.e., in a few months' time. Will it be done in the same way in all places? Under no circumstances. It would be absolutely absurd to apply the same stereotype to Central Russia, the Ukraine and Siberia, to squeeze them into the same mould. I propose that this fundamental idea about free local turnover be formulated in a decision of the congress. As I conceive it, a few days later the Central Committee will issue a circular letter in which it will say, better than I am saying it now, of course (we will find the best writers to write it better): Don't break up anything, don't hurry, don't try to be too clever in a hurry. Act in such a way as to satisfy the middle peasantry to the utmost without damaging the interests of the proletariat. Try one thing, try another, study practical experience, inform us of what you have achieved, and we will set up a special commission, or even several commissions, to study the experience collected; and I think that particularly for this purpose we should enlist the services of Comrade Preobrazhensky, the author of *Paper Currency in the Epoch of the Proletarian Dictatorship*. This is a very important question, because the circulation of money is the sort of thing that serves as an excellent test of whether the trade turnover of the country is satisfactory; and when this turnover is irregular, money is converted into useless paper. We must test the measures adopted ten times and then proceed further on the basis of experience. . . .

We will be asked, people will want to know: Where are the goods to come from?

Free trade requires goods, and the peasants are very shrewd and can be very sarcastic. Can we obtain goods now? We can, because our international economic position has improved enor-

mously. We are fighting against international capital, which, on seeing our republic, said, "These are robbers, reptiles" (these are literally the very words that were conveyed to me by an English sculptress who heard them uttered by one of the most influential politicians). And since they are reptiles one can only treat them with contempt. This was the voice of international capital. It was the voice of the class enemy, and from his point of view he was right. But the correctness of such conclusions has to be tested. We said: If you are a mighty world power, if you are world capital, if you say, "Reptile" and have all the powers of technique at your command, go on, shoot! And when it did, it found that it had hurt itself more than us. After that, capital, which is compelled to reckon with real political and economic life, says, "We must trade." This is where we have achieved a great victory. I will now inform you that we have two offers of a loan amounting to about 100,000,000 rubles, gold. We have gold, but we cannot sell it, because gold is not the sort of thing one can eat. Everybody is ruined, in all countries the currency relations between the capitalist states have been turned upside down by the war to an incredible degree. Moreover, in order to have intercourse with Europe we must have ships; but we have no ships. Our ships are in the hands of the enemy. We have not concluded any agreement with France; she considers that we are in debt to her, and as soon as she can lay her hands on one of our ships she says, "That's mine." They have a navy; we have not. It is owing to this situation that we have been able to realise our gold only to a small, insignificant, ridiculously insignificant, extent. Now we have two offers from capitalist bankers of a loan of 100,000,000 rubles. Of course, this capital will demand extortionate interest. Up to now they have not talked like this; up to now they said, "We will shoot you down and get you for nothing." Now, since they are unable to shoot us, they are prepared to trade. Trade agreements with America and England are, so to speak, well on the way, and also concessions. Only yesterday I received a letter from Mr. Vanderlip, who is here, and who, in addition to a number of complaints, wrote to me about a number of plans for concessions, and for a loan. He is a representative of the most profiteering sort of finance capital

connected with the Western states of America, which are more hostile to Japan. Thus we have economic opportunities of obtaining goods. The extent to which we shall be able to obtain them is another matter; but we have a certain amount of opportunity to do so.

I repeat, the type of economic relations the top part of which appears to be a *bloc* with foreign capitalism will enable the proletarian state power to enter into free exchange with the peasantry below. I know—and I have said this already—that this will give rise to jeers. In Moscow there is a whole intellectual-bureaucratic stratum which tries to create “public opinion.” They began to jeer and say: “So this is Communism! It is like a man on crutches with his face completely concealed by bandages. All we see of Communism is an enigmatic picture.” I have heard quite a lot of jokes of this sort, but these jokes are either bureaucratic or frivolous. Russia emerged from the war in such a condition that she is more like a man who has been almost beaten to death; she was battered for seven years, and thank God we can move about on crutches! That is the position we are in! To think that we can get out of it without crutches means failing to understand anything! As long as there is no revolution in other countries it will take us decades to get out of it, and therefore we must not stint hundreds of millions, or even billions, of our boundless wealth, of our wealth of raw material, in order to obtain the assistance of big advanced capitalism. We shall make up for it many times over later on. Without the assistance of capital it will be impossible for us to retain proletarian power in an incredibly ruined country in which the peasantry, also ruined, constitutes the overwhelming majority—and, of course, for this assistance capital will squeeze hundreds per cent out of us. This is what we have to understand. Hence, either this type of economic relations or nothing. Anyone who presents the question differently understands absolutely nothing about practical economics, and makes shift with witticisms. We must admit that the masses are weary and exhausted. Seven years of war! What effect must this have had upon us if the effects of four years of war are still being felt in the advanced countries!

And in our backward country, after seven years of war, the

workers, who made unparalleled sacrifices, and the masses of the peasantry are in a state of utter exhaustion. It is exhaustion, a state of almost complete incapacity to work. Here we must have an economic respite. We calculated on utilising our gold fund for the purpose of acquiring means of production. The best thing would be to make machines; but even if we bought them we would be able to build up our industries. In order to do that, however, the workers and peasants must be in a fit condition to work; but in the majority of cases workers are unable to work: they are exhausted, weary. They must be sustained; and we must use our gold fund to purchase consumers' goods notwithstanding our former programme. Our former programme was correct theoretically, but practically it was unsound. I will quote to you a memorandum I received from Comrade Lezhava. From this memorandum we see that several hundred thousand poods of various kinds of foodstuffs have already been purchased and are being shipped by express from Lithuania, Finland and Latvia. Today we received information to the effect that a contract has been signed in London for the delivery of 18,500,000 poods of coal, which we ordered for the purpose of reviving the industry of Petrograd, and also the textile industry. Obtaining goods for the peasants in this way is, of course, a violation of the programme, it is wrong; but we must give them a respite, because the people are so exhausted, and if we do not give them a respite they will not be in a fit condition to work.

I must say a word or two about individual goods exchange. Free turnover means individual goods exchange, *i.e.*, it means encouraging the kulaks. What is to be done about it? We must not close our eyes to the fact that the substitution of a tax for the quotas means that under the present system the kulaks will grow more than they have done up to now. They will grow where they could not grow before. But this can be combated, not by means of prohibitive measures, but by state amalgamation and state measures from above. If you give the peasants machines you will thus raise them to a higher level; and when you give them machines, or electrification, tens or hundreds of thousands of small kulaks will be wiped out. As long as you are unable to give these, give a certain quantity of goods. If goods are in our hands we shall retain power,

but to stop, to kill, to sweep away this possibility means preventing all possibility of turnover, it means failing to satisfy the middle peasant and making it impossible to live in harmony with him. The peasantry in Russia has become more of a middle peasantry, and we need not be afraid of exchange becoming individual exchange. Everybody will be able to give something to the state in exchange. One will be able to give surplus grain, another garden produce, a third his labour. In the main, the position is as follows: we must satisfy the economic needs of the middle peasantry and agree to free turnover, otherwise, owing to the delay in the international revolution, it will be impossible, economically impossible, to retain the power of the proletariat in Russia. This must be clearly realised, and we must not be in the least afraid to say it. In the draft resolution on the substitution of a tax in kind for the food quotas (the text of which has been distributed to you) you will find many incongruities, inconsistencies; that is why we wrote at the end: "Approving in the main" (a very wide phrase which may mean a great deal) "the propositions introduced by the C.C. to substitute a tax in kind for the food quotas, the congress instructs the C.C. of the Party to speedily co-ordinate these propositions." We know that they are not co-ordinated; we have not had the time to do that, we have not taken up this work of detail. The form in which the tax is to be introduced and collected will be worked out in detail in a law to be passed by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars. The procedure we had in mind is as follows: if you adopt this draft today it will be put before the very first session of the Central Executive Committee, which will also pass, not a law, but only an amended order. Later, the Council of People's Commissars and the Council of Labour and Defence will convert this into a law, and, what is still more important, into practical instructions. The important thing is that the people in the localities shall understand the significance of this, and come forward to help us.

Why must we substitute a tax for the food quotas? The food quotas implied the taking of all surplus grain, the establishment of a compulsory state monopoly. We could not do otherwise, for we were in dire distress. Theoretically, it is not essential to regard

state monopoly as the best thing from the point of view of Socialism. In a peasant country which has an industry—if the industry is functioning—and which has a certain quantity of goods, it is possible to employ the tax and free turnover system as a transitional measure.

This turnover serves as a stimulus, as an impetus, it rouses the peasant. The owner can (and should) strive for his own interests, because not all his surplus grain will be taken, but only a tax, the dimensions of which will, as far as possible, be determined beforehand. The main thing is to create this stimulus, this impetus, to rouse the small farmer and quicken his farming. We must adapt our state economy to the economy of the middle farmer, which we have not been able to transform in the course of three years, and will not be able to transform even in a decade. I will tell you what this depends on.

The state was confronted with a definite food obligation. That is why we increased the quotas last year. The tax must be smaller. The exact figures have not been worked out. Besides, it is impossible to do so. Popov's pamphlet *Grain Production in the Soviet and Federated Republics* quotes the material of our Central Statistical Board, which gives precise figures and shows why agricultural output diminished.

If the harvest fails, we shall not be able to take surplus grain stocks because there will be none. The grain would have to be taken from the mouths of the peasants. If we have a harvest, everybody will go a little hungry and the state will be saved—or, if we are not able to take from people who are unable to eat their fill, the state will perish. This is what we must explain in our propaganda among the peasants. If we get a tolerable harvest, we should collect about half a billion poods of surplus grain. That will be enough to cover requirements and to put by a certain reserve. The whole thing is to give the peasants a stimulus, something to rouse them from the economic point of view. We must say to the small farmer: "Farmer, produce food and the state will take a minimum tax."

My time has expired and I must conclude. I repeat: we cannot pass a law immediately. The defect in our resolution is that it is

not very legislative, but laws are not drafted at Party congresses. That is why we propose that you adopt the resolution of the C. C. as a basis and instruct it to co-ordinate its propositions. We will print the text of this resolution and the local workers will try to co-ordinate and correct it. We cannot co-ordinate it completely, this is an impossible task, because life is too varied. It is a very difficult thing to find transitional measures. We have not succeeded in doing this by a quick and straight road, but we shall not lose heart, we shall come into our own. Every peasant who is at all intelligent will understand that we, as a government, represent the working class and those toilers with whom the toiling peasants can come to an agreement (and these constitute nine-tenths), and that every reversion to the past means reversion to the old tsarist government. This is proved by the experience of Kronstadt. There they do not want the White Guards, nor do they want our rule—and there is no third—and they are in a state which serves as the best agitation for us and against any new government.

We now have an opportunity of coming to an agreement with the peasants. We must be able to take advantage of this opportunity practically, skilfully, with common sense and flexibility. We know what the apparatus of the Commissariat for Food is like; we know that it is one of the best. Comparing it with others, we realise that it is the best apparatus, and that it must be preserved; but the apparatus must be subordinated to politics. The very best Food Commissariat apparatus is of no earthly use if we are unable to establish relations with the peasants. Unless we do that the very best apparatus will serve, not our class, but Denikin and Kolchak. Since politics call for resolute changes, flexibility and skilful moves, the leaders must understand this. A firm apparatus should be fit for every manœuvre. But if firmness is transformed into ossification, if it hinders change, a struggle is inevitable. That is why we must exert every effort to achieve our purpose without fail, to achieve the complete subordination of the apparatus to politics. Politics are the relations between classes—they determine the fate of the republic. As an auxiliary, the firmer the apparatus the better, the more fit it is for manœuvres. But if it is unable to manœuvre, it is good for nothing.

I ask you to keep the main thing in view, namely, that the work of drawing up the details and of interpretation must take several months. At present we must bear in mind the main thing: we must this very evening announce over the radio to all parts of the world that the congress of the governing party has, in the main, substituted a tax for the food quotas and has thus given a number of stimuli to the small farmer to enlarge his farm, to increase his sown area; that in adopting this policy the congress is correcting the system of relationships between the proletariat and the peasantry and expresses the conviction that in this way firm relations between the proletariat and the peasantry will be achieved.

PARTY UNITY AND THE ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST DEVIATION

*Report Delivered at the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.),
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COMRADES, I do not think there is any need to say a great deal on this question because on all questions our whole congress has approached the subjects on which an official pronouncement must be made in the name of the Party congress, and that means in the name of the whole Party. The resolution "On Unity" consists very largely of a characterisation of the political situation. Of course, you have all read the printed text of this resolution that was distributed.¹ Point 7, which introduces an exceptional measure, namely, the right to expel a member from the Central Committee by a two-thirds majority of a general meeting of members of the C.C., candidates and members of the Central Control Commission, is not for publication. This measure was repeatedly discussed at private conferences at which representatives of all shades expressed their opinions. Let us hope, comrades, that it will not be necessary to apply this point; but it is necessary to have it, in view of the new situation, when we are on the eve of a new and fairly sharp turn, and we want to abolish all traces of separatism. . . .

I will now deal with the resolution on syndicalist and anarchist deviations. Here we are confronted with the question that was touched upon in point 4 of the agenda of the congress. The main point of the whole resolution is the definition of our attitude to certain trends, or deviations of thought. By saying "deviations" we emphasise the fact that we do not yet regard them as something definitely formed, as something absolutely and fully defined, but merely as the beginning of a political trend of which the

¹ See the next item in this volume.—*Ed.*

Party must give its appraisal. Point 3 of the resolution on the syndicalist and anarchist deviation, which you all probably have, evidently contains a misprint (judging by remarks, this misprint has been noted). It should read: "Illustrative of this is the following 'thesis' of the 'Workers' Opposition': 'The organisation of the management of national economy is the function of the All-Russian Congress of Producers organised in industrial unions which elects central bodies to manage the whole of the national economy of the republic.'" We have repeatedly discussed this point during the congress, at private conferences as well as at the open sessions of the congress. I think we have already made it clear that it is utterly impossible to defend this point on the grounds that Engels talked about the union of producers, because it is quite obvious, and an exact quotation of the corresponding passage will prove, that Engels talked about Communist society, in which there would be no classes. This is indisputable to all of us. When there will be no classes in society there will be only producers; there will be no workers and peasants. And we know perfectly well from all the works of Marx and Engels that they drew a very clear distinction between the period in which classes still exist and the period in which they will no longer exist. Marx and Engels pitilessly ridiculed all ideas, talk and assumptions about the disappearance of classes before Communism; and they said that Communism alone meant the abolition of classes.

We have reached a situation in which this question of abolishing classes has been raised in a practical manner for the first time, and when two main classes have remained in this peasant country—the working class and the peasantry. In addition to these, however, there are whole groups of remnants and survivals of capitalism.

Our programme definitely says that we are taking the first steps, that we shall have a number of transitional stages. But in the practical work of our Soviets and in the whole history of the revolution we have constantly had graphic illustrations of the fact that it is wrong to give such theoretical definitions as the opposition is giving in the present case. We know perfectly well that classes have remained in our country and will remain for a long time to come; that in a land in which the peasant population

predominates they will inevitably remain for a long time, for many years. The shortest period in which we can succeed in organising large-scale industry in order that it may be able to create a reserve with which to subordinate agriculture to itself is ten years. This is the shortest period even with unprecedentedly favourable technical conditions. We know, however, that we are living in conditions that are unprecedentedly unfavourable. We have a plan for building up Russia on the basis of modern large-scale industry; that plan is the electrification plan drawn up by scientists. The shortest period provided for in that plan is ten years, and this is based on the assumption that conditions will be something approaching the normal. But we know perfectly well that these conditions do not exist. Needless to say, this means that ten years is a very short period for us. We have reached the very core of the question: a situation is possible in which classes hostile to the proletariat remain; therefore it is practically impossible now to create what Engels spoke about. There will be the dictatorship of the proletariat. After that there will be classless society.

Thus, a situation is possible in which classes hostile to the proletariat remain. Later there will be classless society. Marx and Engels ruthlessly fought against those who forgot about the difference between classes, who spoke about producers, about the people, or about the toilers in general. Anyone who knows the works of Marx and Engels to any degree cannot forget that the ridicule of those who talk about producers, the people, the toilers in general, runs like a thread through all these works. There are no toilers in general, or workers in general; there are either small proprietors who own means of production and whose whole mentality and habits of life are capitalistic—and they cannot be anything else—or wage workers with an altogether different mentality, wage workers in large-scale industry, who stand in opposition to, in antagonism, in conflict with the capitalists.

We have approached this question after three years of struggle, after having experienced the application of the political power of the proletariat, when we know what enormous difficulties exist in the interrelations between classes, when classes still exist, when remnants of the bourgeoisie are still observed in all the crevices of

our social life, within the Soviet institutions. Under such circumstances the appearance of a platform containing the theses I have read to you is a clear and obvious syndicalist-anarchist deviation. These words are not extreme, they are deliberate. A deviation is not yet a finished trend. A deviation is something that can be rectified. People have just wandered somewhat from the path, or are beginning to wander from the path, but they can still be put right. This, in my opinion, is what the Russian word *uklon*¹ means. This emphasises the fact that there is nothing here that is final yet, that the matter can be easily rectified; it is a desire to warn and to raise the question in all its scope and on principle. If anyone can find a word that expresses this idea better, by all means let him do so. I hope we shall not begin to argue over words; in essence we are examining this thesis as the main thesis in order not to chase after a mass of similar ideas, of which the "Workers' Opposition" group has very many. We will leave this to be gone into by our writers, and also by the leaders of this trend, for at the end of the resolution we deliberately say that more space can and should be given in special publications, in symposiums, to a more comprehensive interchange of opinion between Party members on all the questions indicated. We cannot afford to postpone this question. We are a Party fighting amidst acute difficulties. We must say to ourselves: In order that unity may be firm we must condemn a definite deviation. As soon as it has been noted, we must bring it out and discuss it. But if a comprehensive discussion is necessary, let us have it, by all means; we shall find the people who will quote in detail the whole of our literature, and if it is necessary and appropriate, we shall raise this question internationally, for you have just heard the report of the representative of the Communist International and you all know that a certain deviation towards the Left exists in the ranks of the revolutionary international working class movement. The deviation about which I have just spoken is the same as the anarchist deviation of the German Communist Labour Party, the fight against which was clearly revealed at the last Congress of the Communist

¹ Deviation.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

International. The terms that were employed there to appraise this deviation were often sharper than the word "deviation." You know that this is an international question. That is why to put an end to it by saying, "Don't discuss it any more, and that is all there is to it," would be wrong. But a theoretical discussion is one thing, the political line of the Party, a political struggle, is another. We are not a debating society. Of course, we can, and will, publish symposiums and special publications, but we must first of all fight amidst difficult conditions, and that is why we must be united. If in the course of this, proposals like organising an "All-Russian Congress of Producers" are introduced in a political discussion, in a political struggle, we cannot march forward unitedly and in step; this is not the policy we have defined for ourselves for a number of years to come. It is a policy that would disrupt the team work of the Party; and this policy is not only wrong theoretically, it is wrong also because it incorrectly defines the relations between classes—that which is radical and fundamental, without which there is no Marxism, and on which the Second Congress of the Communist International passed a resolution. The situation is such today that the non-party element is yielding to the petty-bourgeois vacillations which are inevitable in the present economic condition of Russia. We must remember that, in a certain respect, the internal danger is greater than the Denikin and Yudenich danger; and we must display not only formal unity, but unity that goes much deeper. In creating such unity we cannot dispense with such a resolution.

The next very important thing in my opinion is point 4 of this resolution, which gives an interpretation of our programme, an authentic interpretation, *i.e.*, the author's interpretation. The congress was the author, and that is why the congress must give its interpretation in order to put an end to wavering, and to the tricks that are sometimes played with our programme: it is alleged that our programme says about the trade unions what somebody would like it to say. You have heard Comrade Ryazanov's criticism of this programme from this rostrum—we will thank the critic for his theoretical research! You have heard Comrade Shlyapnikov's criticism. This cannot be ignored. I think that here, in this

resolution, we have all that we now require. We must say in the name of the congress, which endorses the programme, and which is the supreme organ of the Party: This is what we understand the programme to mean. I repeat, this does not prohibit theoretical disputes. Proposals to amend the programme may be made; no suggestion is being made to prohibit this. We do not think our programme is so magnificent that it requires no modification whatever; but we have no formal proposals at present, we have not allocated any time for the examination of this question. If we read this programme carefully we shall find the following: "The trade unions . . . must eventually actually concentrate in their hands," etc. "Must eventually actually concentrate"—this should be underlined. And a few lines above that we read: "According to the laws . . . the trade unions already participate in all the local and central organs of management of industry." We know that capitalist industry was built up in the course of decades with the assistance of all the advanced countries of the world. Have we already dropped into second childhood to think that at a time of dire distress and impoverishment in a country in which the workers are in the minority, in a country with a tortured and bleeding proletarian vanguard and a mass of peasants, we can complete this process so quickly? We have not even laid the main foundation, we have only begun to define by experience how to conduct the management of industry with the participation of the trade unions. We know that the principal obstacle is want. It is not true to say that we are not enlisting the masses; on the contrary, everyone among the masses of the workers who displays any talent, any noticeable ability, receives our sincerest support. All we need is that the situation become just a little easier. We need a year or two, not less, of relief from famine. From the point of view of history this is an insignificant period of time, but under our conditions it is a long one. A year or two of relief from famine, a year or two of regular supplies of fuel so that the factories may function, and we shall receive a hundred times more assistance from the working class, and far more talent will arise from its ranks than now. No one has any doubts about this, nor can there be any doubts. This assistance is not forthcoming at

present, not because we do not want it. We are doing all we can to get it. No one can say that the government, the trade unions, or the Central Committee of the Party have allowed a single opportunity to slip by in this respect; but we know that there is desperate want in the country, everywhere there is hunger and poverty, and very often passivity sets in as a result of this. Let us not fear to call evil and misfortune by their proper names. This is what is hindering the rise of the energy of the masses. In such a situation, when we know from statistics that sixty per cent of the management boards consists of workers, to attempt to interpret the words in the programme—"The trade unions . . . must eventually actually concentrate," etc.—*à la* Shlyapnikov is absolutely impermissible.

An authentic interpretation of the programme will enable us to combine the necessary tactical solidarity and unity with the necessary freedom of discussion, and this is emphasised at the end of the resolution. What does the resolution say? Point 6 reads:

"On all these grounds the congress of the R.C.P. resolutely rejects these ideas, which express a syndicalist and anarchist deviation and, firstly, considers it necessary to wage an unswerving and systematic struggle against these ideas; secondly, the congress regards the propaganda of these ideas as being incompatible with membership of the R.C.P.

"Instructing the C.C. of the Party strictly to carry out these decisions, the congress at the same time points out that space can and should be given in special publications, symposiums, etc., to a more comprehensive interchange of opinion among Party members on all the questions indicated."

Do you not see—you agitators and propagandists in one form or another—do you not see the difference between the propaganda of ideas in fighting political parties and the interchange of opinion in special publications and symposiums? I am sure that every person who desires to understand this resolution will see this difference. And we hope that on the Central Committee—into which we are taking representatives of this deviation—these representatives will treat the decisions of the Party congress as all class conscious disciplined Party members should do; we hope that with their assistance we shall determine this dividing line on the

Central Committee without creating a special situation; we shall investigate what is going on in the Party—whether it is the propaganda of ideas within a fighting political party, or the interchange of opinion in special publications and symposiums. If anyone is interested in studying the quotations from Engels down to the last word, here is his opportunity! There are theoreticians who are always ready to give the Party useful advice. That is necessary. We shall publish two or three big symposiums—that is useful and absolutely necessary. But is this anything like a conflict of platforms? Can these two things be confused? No one who desires to understand our political situation will confuse them. Unity in the struggle, to cease arguing among the broad masses of the working-class members of the Party is one thing. . . .

Do not hinder our political work, especially in a difficult situation; but do not abandon scientific research. If Comrade Shlyapnikov, for example, in addition to his recently published book on his experiences in the revolutionary struggle in the underground period, writes a second volume in his leisure time during the next few months, in which he will analyse the concept “producer,” we shall all be pleased. But the present resolution will serve as our landmark. We started the widest and freest discussion. The platform of the “Workers’ Opposition” was published in 250,000 copies in the central organ of the Party. We weighed it up from all sides, we elected delegates on the basis of this platform, and finally we convened this congress, which, summing up the political discussion, says: The deviation has become revealed, we shall not play hide and seek, we shall say openly, a deviation is a deviation and it must be straightened out. We shall straighten it out, and the discussion will be a theoretical discussion.

That is why I renew and support the proposal that we adopt both these resolutions, strengthen the unity of the Party, and correctly define what Party meetings should deal with and what individual persons—Marxists, Communists who want to help the Party and study this or that theoretical question—may do in their spare time.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE TENTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.), ON PARTY UNITY

1) THE congress calls the attention of all members of the Party to the fact that the unity and solidarity of the ranks of the Party, the ensuring of complete mutual confidence among Party members and genuine team work, the genuine embodiment of the unity of will of the vanguard of the proletariat, are particularly necessary at the present time, when a number of circumstances increase the vacillation among the petty-bourgeois population of the country.

2) Notwithstanding this, even before the general Party discussion on the trade unions, certain signs of factionalism were revealed in the Party, *i.e.*, the appearance of groups with separate platforms striving to separate themselves to a certain extent and to create their own group discipline. Such symptoms of factionalism were revealed, for example, at a Party conference in Moscow (November 1920) and in Kharkov by the so-called "Workers' Opposition" group, and partly by the so-called "Democratic Centralism" group.

All class conscious workers must clearly appreciate the harm and impermissibility of any factionalism whatsoever, which, notwithstanding all the desires of the representatives of certain groups to safeguard Party unity, must in practice inevitably lead to the weakening of team work and strengthen the repeated attempts of the enemies who have attached themselves to the governing Party to widen divisions and to take advantage of them for their counter-revolutionary aims.

Perhaps the most striking example of how the enemies of the proletariat take advantage of every deviation from the strictly

consistent Communist line was that of the Kronstadt mutiny, when the bourgeois counter-revolution and White Guards in all countries of the world immediately expressed their readiness to accept even the slogans of the Soviet system if only they could secure the overthrow of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia; when the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the bourgeois counter-revolution in general in Kronstadt utilised the slogans of insurrection ostensibly in the name of Soviet power against the Soviet government of Russia. These facts fully prove that the White Guards try to disguise and succeed in disguising themselves as Communists, and even as the most Left Communists, for the purpose of weakening and overthrowing the bulwark of the proletarian revolution in Russia. Menshevik leaflets distributed in Petrograd on the eve of the Kronstadt mutiny also show how the Mensheviks took advantage of the disagreements and certain rudiments of factionalism in the R.C.P. in order actually to instigate and support the Kronstadt mutineers, Socialist-Revolutionaries and White Guards, while in words representing themselves as opponents of the mutiny and supporters of Soviet power with only slight modifications.

3) In this question, propaganda should consist, on the one hand, of a comprehensive explanation of the harmfulness and danger of factionalism from the point of view of Party unity and of effecting the unity of will of the vanguard of the proletariat as the fundamental condition for the success of the dictatorship of the proletariat. On the other hand, it should consist of an explanation of the peculiar features of the latest tactical devices of the enemies of the Soviet power. These enemies, having become convinced of the hopelessness of counter-revolution under the openly White Guard flag, are now exerting every effort to clutch at the disagreements within the R.C.P. and to advance the counter-revolution in one way or another by transferring power to a political shade which on the surface is closest to the recognition of Soviet power.

Propaganda must also teach the experience of preceding revolutions in which the counter-revolution supported the opposition which stood closest to the extreme revolutionary party in order to

shake and overthrow the revolutionary dictatorship and thus pave the way for the complete victory of the counter-revolution, of the capitalists and landlords.

4) In the practical struggle against factionalism, every organisation of the Party must take strict measures to prevent any factional conduct whatsoever. The absolutely necessary criticism of defects in the Party must be conducted in such a way that every practical proposal shall be formulated in the most precise form possible and submitted immediately, without any red tape, for consideration and decision to the leading local and central bodies of the Party. Moreover, everyone who criticises must see to it that the form of his criticism takes into account the position the Party occupies in a ring of enemies, and the content of his criticism must be of the nature of direct participation in Soviet and Party work and practical efforts to rectify the errors of the Party or of individual Party members. Every analysis of the general line of the Party or of its practical experience, the verification of the fulfilment of its decisions, the study of methods of rectifying errors, etc., must under no circumstances be submitted for preliminary discussion to groups formed on the basis of "platforms," etc., but must be exclusively submitted for discussion directly to all the members of the Party. For this purpose, the congress orders that the *Discussion Sheet* and special symposiums be published more regularly, and that unceasing efforts be made to secure that criticism shall be concentrated on essentials and not assume a form capable of assisting the class enemies of the proletariat.

5) Rejecting in principle the deviation towards syndicalism and anarchism, to the examination of which a special resolution is devoted, and instructing the C.C. to secure the complete elimination of all factionalism, the congress at the same time declares that every practical proposal concerning questions to which the so-called "Workers' Opposition" group, for example, has devoted special attention, such as purging the Party of non-proletarian and unreliable elements, combating bureaucracy, developing democracy and the initiative of workers, etc., must be examined with the greatest care and tried out in practical work. The Party must know that we do not carry out all the necessary measures on these

questions because we encounter a number of diverse obstacles, and that, while ruthlessly rejecting unpractical and factional pseudo-criticism, the Party will unceasingly continue—trying out new methods—to fight with all the means at its disposal against bureaucracy, for the extension of democracy and initiative, for discovering, exposing and expelling alien elements in the Party, etc.

6) The congress therefore declares dissolved and orders the immediate dissolution of all groups without exception that have been formed on the basis of various platforms (such as the "Workers' Opposition" group, the "Democratic Centralism" group, etc.). Non-compliance with this order of the congress must involve unconditional and immediate expulsion from the Party.

7) In order to effect strict discipline within the Party and in all Soviet work and to secure the greatest unity in removing all factionalism, the congress authorises the C.C. to apply all Party penalties, including expulsion, in cases of breach of discipline or of reviving or engaging in factionalism; and in regard to members of the Central Committee to reduce them to the status of candidates and, as an extreme measure, to expel them from the Party. A necessary condition for the application of such an extreme measure to members of the C.C., candidates of the C.C. and members of the Control Commission is the convocation of the plenum of the C.C., to which all candidates of the C.C. and all members of the Control Commission shall be invited. If such an assembly of the most responsible leaders of the Party, by a two-thirds majority, deems it necessary to reduce a member of the C.C. to the status of candidate, or to expel him from the Party, this measure must be put into effect immediately.

March 1921

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF TRANSPORT WORKERS

March 27, 1921

COMRADES, permit me first of all to thank you for your greetings and in reply also to greet your congress. Before dealing with the subject that directly concerns the work of your congress, and with what the Soviet power expects of your congress, permit me to refer to something that is somewhat remote from the subject.

As I was entering your hall I saw a placard bearing the inscription: "The reign of the workers and peasants will never end." And when I read this strange placard, which, it is true, was not posted in the usual place, but in a corner—perhaps it occurred to somebody that it was not a good one and he shifted it out of the way—when I read this strange placard, I said to myself: What elementary and fundamental things there is confusion and misunderstanding about! Indeed, if it were true that the reign of the workers and peasants will never end, that would mean that socialism will never come, for socialism means the abolition of classes; and as long as workers and peasants remain there will be various classes, and therefore complete socialism will be impossible. And pondering over the fact that three and a half years after the October Revolution there are still such queer placards in our country, even if they are pushed a little to one side, I began to think that great confusion probably still prevails even in regard to the most widespread and popular of our slogans. We all sing the song about facing the last fight—this, for example, is one of our most widespread slogans, which everyone repeats. But I am afraid that if we were to ask a large section of Communists against whom they are waging, not the last fight, of course, that would be saying too much, but one of the last fights—I am afraid only a few would give a correct reply to this question and show that they clearly un-

derstand against what, or against whom, we are now waging one of our last fights. And it seems to me that this spring, in view of the political events which have taken place and upon which the attention of the broad masses of workers and peasants has been focused, we ought once again to ascertain, or at all events try to ascertain, against whom we are waging one of our last fights, this spring, right now. Permit me to dwell on this question.

In order to understand this question I think we must first of all review once again, as precisely and as soberly as possible, the forces that confront each other, the conflict of which determines the fate of the Soviet power, and generally speaking the progress and development of the proletarian revolution, the revolution for the overthrow of capital in Russia as well as in other countries. What are these forces? How are they grouped against one another? What is the disposition of these forces at the present time? Every really serious aggravation of the political situation, every new turn in political events, even if not very important, should always cause every thinking worker and every thinking peasant to ask himself this question, the question: "What forces exist; how are they grouped?" And only when we are able to calculate these forces correctly and quite soberly, irrespective of our sympathies and desires, shall we be able to draw proper conclusions concerning our policy in general, and concerning our immediate tasks in particular. Permit me then briefly to describe these forces.

Taken on the whole, there are three such forces. I will start with that force which is closest to us, I will start with the proletariat. This is the first force. This is the first separate class. You all know this very well, you yourselves live right in the very midst of this class. What is its position now? In the Soviet Republic this class is the class which took power three and a half years ago, which during this period has been exercising its rule, its dictatorship, and which suffered and endured, experienced want and privation more than any other class in these three and a half years. For the working class, for the proletariat, these three and a half years, the greater part of which was spent on the Soviet government's desperate civil war against the whole capitalist world, meant poverty, privation, sacrifice, intense want, such as have

never been experienced in the world before. A strange thing happened. The class which took political power in its hands did so knowing that it took this power alone. This is contained in the concept dictatorship of the proletariat. This concept has meaning only when a single class knows that it alone is taking political power in its hands and does not deceive itself or others with talk about "popular, elected" government "sanctified by the whole people." As you all very well know, there are very many, far too many, who are fond of this sort of talk, but at all events you will not find them among the proletariat, because the proletarians have realised and have inscribed in the constitution, in the fundamental laws of the republic, that it is a matter of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This class understood that it was taking power alone under exceptionally difficult conditions. It has exercised this dictatorship in the way every dictatorship is exercised, *i.e.*, it has exercised its political domination with the utmost firmness and indomitableness. And during the three and a half years it has exercised this political rule it has suffered distress, privation, starvation and a deterioration of its economic position such as no other class in history has suffered. It is not surprising that as a result of such superhuman effort we now see a special weariness and exhaustion and a special strain among this class.

How could it happen that in a country in which the proletariat is numerically so small compared with the rest of the population, that in a backward country that was artificially cut off by armed force from countries with a more numerous, class conscious, disciplined and organised proletariat, how could it happen that in such a country, a single class could exercise its power in spite of the resistance and the attacks of the bourgeoisie of the whole world? How could this go on for three and a half years? What sustained it? We know that the support came from within the country, from the masses of the peasants. I will deal with this second force in a moment; but first of all we must finish examining this first force. I said, and you have all observed the life of your comrades in the factories, works, depots, and workshops, and so you know, that never has the suffering of this class been so great and acute as it is in the epoch of its dictatorship. The country has

never been so weary, so worn out as it is now. What gave this class the moral strength to bear this privation? It is clear and absolutely obvious that it had to obtain the moral strength to overcome this material privation from somewhere. As you know, the question of moral strength, of moral support, is an indefinite one; moral strength may mean anything, and may be made to mean anything. In order to avoid this danger of making the term "moral strength" mean something indefinite or fantastic, I ask myself whether it is possible to find signs of a precise definition of what gave the proletariat the moral strength to bear the unprecedented material privation connected with its political rule. I think that if we put the question in this way we shall find a precise reply. Ask yourselves, could the Soviet Republic have borne what it has for three and a half years and so successfully withstood the attacks of the White Guards supported by the capitalists of all countries of the world if it had had beside it the backward and not the advanced countries? It is sufficient to put the question to receive an unhesitating reply.

You know that for three and a half years all the wealthiest powers in the world fought against us. The military forces which fought against us and which supported Kolchak, Yudenich, Denikin and Wrangel—you all know this very well, every one of you fought in the civil war—were many times, immeasurably and undoubtedly superior to our military forces. You know perfectly well that the might of these states is immeasurably greater than ours even now. How, then, could it happen that, having set themselves the task of conquering the Soviet power, they should have failed to do so? How could this happen? We have a precise reply to this question. This could happen because the proletariat in all the capitalist countries was with us. Even in those cases when it was obviously under the influence of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries—they bear different names in European countries—it nevertheless refused to support the fight against us. At last the leaders were compelled to make concessions to the masses and these workers disrupted this war. We did not win the victory, our military forces were insignificant; the victory was won by the fact that the powers could not hurl the whole of their military forces

against us. The workers of advanced countries determine the course of war to such an extent that it is impossible to wage war against their will; and they at last disrupted the war against us by passive and semi-passive resistance. This incontrovertible fact gives a precise reply to the question of where the Russian proletariat was able to obtain the moral strength to hold out for three and a half years and win. The moral strength of the Russian worker was that he knew, felt, sensed the assistance and support which the proletariat in all the advanced countries of Europe rendered him in this struggle. The direction in which the labour movement in these countries is developing is indicated by the fact that there has not been in recent times a more important event in the labour movement of Europe than the split which took place in the Socialist Parties in England, France, Italy and other countries, vanquished and victors, in countries with different cultures and varying degrees of economic development. In all countries the most important event this year has been the fact that out of the broken and utterly shipwrecked Socialist and Social-Democratic Parties—in Russia we call them Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries—Communist Parties have been formed which rely on the support of all that is most advanced in the working class. And, of course, there can be no doubt that if instead of advanced countries backward countries in which there are no mighty proletarian masses had fought against us, we would have been unable to hold out three and a half months, let alone three and a half years. Could our proletariat have had the moral strength had it not relied on the sympathy of the workers of the advanced countries, who supported us in spite of the lies about the Soviet government that are broadcast by the imperialists in millions of copies, in spite of the efforts of the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary “labour leaders,” who were bound to and did disrupt the struggle the workers waged for us? Relying on this support, our proletariat, numerically weak, tormented by poverty and privation, won, because it possessed moral strength.

This is the first force.

The second force is that which stands between the development of capital and the proletariat. It is the petty bourgeoisie, the small

proprietors, it is what in Russia represents the overwhelming majority of the population—the peasantry. They are mainly small proprietors, and small farmers. Nine-tenths of them are like that, and they cannot be anything else. They do not take part in the acute daily struggle between capital and labour. They have not been schooled; their economic and political conditions of life do not bring them together, but disunite them, repel one from another, transform them into millions of individual small proprietors. Such are the facts, of which you are all perfectly well aware. Collectives, collective farms and communes will not change this for long, long years. Thanks to the revolutionary energy and devotion of the proletarian dictatorship, this force was able to put an end to its enemies on the Right, the landlord class, more quickly than has ever been done before, sweep it right away, abolish its rule with unprecedented rapidity. But the more quickly it abolished the rule of the landlords, the more quickly it turned to its farms on the nationalised land, the more resolutely it settled accounts with the small minority of kulaks, the sooner it itself became transformed into small masters. You know that during this period the Russian countryside has become more levelled up. The number of peasants with a large amount of land and the number of landless peasants have diminished, while the number of middle farms has increased. During this period our countryside has become more petty-bourgeois. This is an independent class, the class which, after the abolition, the expulsion of the landlords and capitalists, is the only class capable of opposing the proletariat. That is why it is absurd to write on placards that the reign of the workers and peasants will never end.

You know what this force is from the point of view of its political mood. It is a vacillating force. We have seen this in our revolution in all parts of the country—in one way in Russia, differently in Siberia, differently in the Ukraine, but everywhere the result is the same: it is a vacillating force. For a long time they were in the leading strings of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks—in the Kerensky period, in the Kolchak period, under the Constituent Assembly in Samara, when the Menshevik Maisky was a minister of Kolchak, or of one of his predecessors, etc. This

force oscillated between the leadership of the proletariat and the leadership of the bourgeoisie. Why did not this force, which comprises the overwhelming majority, lead itself? Because the economic conditions of life of these masses are such that they cannot organise and unite by their own efforts. This should be clear to everyone who does not yield to the power of empty words about "universal suffrage," about the Constituent Assembly, and similar "democracies," which have deceived the people for hundreds of years in all countries, and which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks tried to carry through for hundreds of weeks in our country, coming a cropper "on this very spot every blessed time." We know from our own experience—and we see confirmation of it in the development of all revolutions, if we take the modern epoch, a hundred and fifty years, say, all over the world—that the result has been the same everywhere: every attempt on the part of the petty bourgeoisie in general, and of the peasants in particular, to realise their strength, to direct economics and politics in their own way, has failed. Either under the leadership of the proletariat, or under the leadership of the capitalists—there is no middle course. All those who dream about this middle course are empty dreamers, fantasists. They are refuted by politics, economics and history. All the teachings of Marx show that once the small proprietors become owners of means of production and land, the exchange between them necessarily gives rise to capital, and simultaneously to the antagonisms between capital and labour. The struggle between capital and the proletariat is inevitable; it is a law which manifests itself all over the world; and those who do not want to deceive themselves cannot but realise this.

These fundamental economic facts explain why this force cannot manifest itself by its own efforts and why in the history of all revolutions attempts to do so have always failed. In so far as the proletariat was unable to lead the revolution, this force always came under the leadership of the bourgeoisie. That was the case in all revolutions; Russians, of course, are not made of different clay, and if they attempt to become saints, they will only make themselves look ridiculous. It goes without saying that history treats us as it treats others. This is particularly clear to

all of us because we have experienced the rule of Kerensky. At that time the government had to support it a hundred times more wise and educated leaders of politics, men with great experience in politics and in the administration of the state, than the Bolsheviks have. If we were to count all the officials who sabotage us, but who did not make it their business to sabotage the Kerensky government, which relied on the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, we would find that they are in the overwhelming majority. But it collapsed nevertheless. Hence there were factors which counterbalanced the enormous preponderance of intellectual and educated forces who were accustomed to the administration of the state and who had learnt this art decades before they had to take political power in their hands. This was also the experience, in other variants, in the Ukraine, the Don, and the Kuban, and all ended in the same way. There could be no fortuity here. Such is the economic and political law of the second force: either under the leadership of the proletariat—a hard road, but one which can lead out of the rule of the landlords and capitalists—or under the leadership of the capitalists, as in the advanced democratic republics, even in America, where the free distribution of land (sixty dessiatins¹ were given free to every newcomer—better conditions could not be imagined!) has not yet entirely come to an end, and where this led to the complete domination of capital.

This is the second force.

In our country this second force is wavering; it is particularly weary. It has had to bear the burdens of the revolution, and in the past few years these have been thrust upon it to an even greater degree: the bad harvest year, the quotas connected with the dying of cattle, shortage of fodder, etc. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that this second force, the masses of the peasantry, should give way to despair. They could not dream of improving their conditions in spite of the fact that three and a half years have passed since the landlords were abolished; but it is becoming necessary to improve them. The dispersing army can-

¹ *Dessiatin*—2.7 acres.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

not find proper employment for its labour power; and this petty-bourgeois force is being transformed into an anarchist element which expresses its demands in unrest.

The third force is familiar to you all, it is the landlords and capitalists. This force is not conspicuous in our country today. But one of the particularly important events, one of the particularly important lessons of the past few weeks—the Kronstadt events—appeared like a flash of lightning and lit up reality more clearly than anything else.

There is not a country in Europe now in which there are no White Guard elements. It is calculated that there are about 700,000 Russian émigrés abroad. These are fugitive capitalists and the mass of officials and office workers who could not adapt themselves to Soviet rule. We do not see this third force. It emigrated abroad. But it lives and operates in alliance with the capitalists of the whole world, who are assisting it as they are assisting Kolchak, Yudenich and Wrangel, assisting it with money and in other ways, because they have their international connections. We all remember these people. You, of course, have noticed in the newspapers the abundance of extracts from the White Guard press, extracts and explanations of the events in Kronstadt. During the past few days these events have been described by Burtsev, who publishes a newspaper in Paris, they have been appraised by Mil-yukov—you of course have read all this. Why have our newspapers devoted so much attention to this? Was it right to do so? It was. Because we must know our enemy. He is not so conspicuous now that he has emigrated. But sec, he has not moved very far away, only a few thousand versts at most; having moved that distance, he went into concealment. He is intact, he is alive, he is waiting. That is why we must watch him closely, the more so that we are dealing not only with refugees. No, we are dealing with the direct coadjutors of world capital, maintained by it and operating in conjunction with it.

Of course, you all noticed that extracts from the White Guard newspapers published abroad were given side by side with extracts from English and French newspapers. They represent a single chorus, a single orchestra. It is true that these orchestras

are not conducted by one man conducting a piece according to music. International capital conducts them by means less conspicuous than a conductor's baton, but that it is a single orchestra should be clear from any one of these extracts. They have admitted that if the slogan becomes "Soviet power without the Bolsheviks" they all agree. And Milyukov explains this with particular clarity. He has studied history very closely and has refurbished all his knowledge by experiencing Russian history on his own hide, as it were. He has supplemented his twenty years' professorial study with twenty months of personal experience. He declares that if the slogan becomes "Soviet power without the Bolsheviks" he is in favour of it. Abroad, in Paris, he cannot see whether this shift will be a little towards the Right or a little towards the Left, towards the anarchists. He cannot see what is going on in Kronstadt, but he says: "Messieurs monarchists, don't hurry, don't spoil the thing by shouting about it." He says that if the shift is towards the Left he is prepared to be in favour of Soviet power against the Bolsheviks.

This is what Milyukov writes, and he is absolutely right. When he says that the Kronstadt events reveal a striving to create Soviet rule without the Bolsheviks—a little to the Right, with a little bit of free trade, with a little bit of the Constituent Assembly—he shows that he has learnt something from Russian history and from the landlords and capitalists. Listen to what any Menshevik says and you will hear all this perhaps without leaving this hall. If the slogan of the Kronstadt events is a deviation slightly to the Left—Soviet power with the anarchists, begotten by misfortune, war, the demobilisation of the army—why is Milyukov in favour of it? Because he knows that a deviation may be either towards the proletarian dictatorship or towards the capitalists.

Political power cannot exist in any other way. Although we are waging, not the last fight, but one of the last fights, the only correct reply to the question "Against whom shall we wage one of the last fights today?" is: "Against the petty-bourgeois element at home." [*Applause.*] As for the landlords and capitalists, we vanquished them in the first campaign, but only in the first; the second campaign will be waged on an international scale. Modern capitalism cannot fight against us, it could not even if it were a

hundred times stronger than it is, because over there, in the advanced countries, the workers disrupted its war yesterday and will disrupt it even more effectively tomorrow; because over there the consequences of the war are unfolding themselves more and more. As for the petty-bourgeois element at home, we have vanquished it, but it will make itself felt again; and this is what is taken into account by the landlords and the capitalists, particularly the wiser of them, like Milyukov, who said to the monarchists: "Sit still, keep quiet, otherwise you will only strengthen the Soviet power." This has been proved by the general progress of the revolutions in which there were short-lived dictatorships of the toilers temporarily supported by the rural districts, but in which there was no consolidated power of the toilers; after a brief period everything slipped back. Everything slipped back precisely because the peasants, the toilers, the small proprietors, cannot have their own policy, and after vacillating for some time they have to retreat. That was the case in the Great French Revolution, that was the case on a smaller scale in all revolutions. And, of course, everybody has learnt this lesson. Our White Guards crossed the frontier, rode off a distance of three days' journey, and are watching and waiting, backed and supported by West European capital. This is the situation. And from this the tasks and duties of the proletariat clearly emerge.

Weariness and exhaustion give rise to a certain mood, and sometimes to desperation. As is always the case, among revolutionary elements this mood and desperation find expression in anarchism. That was the case in all capitalist countries, that is what is taking place here. The petty-bourgeois element is undergoing a crisis because it has had a hard time of it during the past few years; not as hard as the proletariat had it in 1919, but a hard time, nevertheless. The peasantry had to save the state, had to agree to quotas without remuneration; but it cannot stand this strain any longer. That is why it is filled with consternation, vacillation, wavering; and that is what is taken into account by the capitalist enemy, who says: "Only get it shaking, rocking a little, and the whole thing will start rolling." This is what the Kronstadt events mean in the light of class forces on an all-Russian and

international scale. This is what one of the last fights we are waging means; for we have not vanquished this petty-bourgeois-anarchist element, and victory over it determines the immediate fate of the revolution today. If we do not vanquish it we shall roll back as the French Revolution did. This is inevitable, and we must look it in the face and not blind ourselves with phrases and excuses. We must do all we possibly can to alleviate the position of these masses and preserve the proletarian leadership; and if we do, the growing movement of the Communist revolution in Europe will obtain fresh reinforcements. What has not taken place there today may take place tomorrow, and what will not take place tomorrow may take place the day after tomorrow; but in world history periods like tomorrow and the day after tomorrow are not less than several years.

This is my reply to the question as to what we are now fighting and waging one of our last fights for, the question as to the significance of recent events, the significance of the class struggle in Russia. It is now clear why this struggle has become so acute, why it is so difficult for us to begin to understand that it is not Yudenich, Kolchak or Denikin who is the principal enemy, but our own situation, our own environment.

Now I can pass to the concluding part of my speech, which is already too long, to the position of railway and water transport, and to the tasks of the Railway and Water Transport Workers' Congress. I think that what I have described here is very closely, inseparably bound up with these tasks. There is hardly another section of the proletariat which comes so closely into contact with industry and agriculture in its everyday economic activity as the railway and water transport workers. You must provide food for the cities, and you must revive the rural districts by transporting manufactured goods to them. This is clear to everyone; but it is clearer to railway and water transport workers than to anyone else, because that is their everyday work. And from this, it seems to me, follow the exceptionally important tasks, the responsibility, that devolve on the railway and water transport workers at the present time.

You all know that your congress has gathered at a time when

only recently friction existed between the upper and lower ranks of the union, and when this disharmony had spread to the Party. When this question was brought up at the last Party congress, decisions were adopted to harmonise the upper and lower ranks by subordinating the upper ranks to the lower ranks, by rectifying the mistakes—minor mistakes, in my opinion, but mistakes that required rectification—that had been committed by the upper ranks. You know that the Party congress rectified these mistakes, that the congress, which gathered when there was least harmony between the leading upper ranks, finished its labours with greater solidarity and greater unity in the ranks of the Communist Party than had existed up to that time. This is the legitimate, necessary and only correct reply that the vanguard, *i.e.*, the leading section of the proletariat, can give to the movement of the petty-bourgeois-anarchist element. If we class conscious workers realise the danger of this movement, if we rally our forces, work ten times more harmoniously, display a hundred times more solidarity, we shall increase our forces tenfold, and then, having repulsed the military attack, we shall conquer the vacillations and wavering of this element, which is disturbing the whole of our everyday life and, I repeat, is therefore dangerous. The decisions of the Party congress, which rectified what was called to its attention, signify a great step forward in increasing the solidarity and harmony of the proletarian army. You at your congress must do the same and put the decisions of the Party congress into practice.

I repeat, the fate of the revolution depends more directly upon the work of this section of the proletariat than upon any other section. We must restore exchange between agriculture and industry, and in order to do that we must have material footholds. What is the material foothold for connection between industry and agriculture? It is railway and water transport. That is why it is your duty to pay particularly serious attention to your work; and this not only applies to those of you who are members of the Communist Party, and therefore the conscious vehicles of the proletarian dictatorship, but also to those of you who do not belong to the Party, but who are officials of a trade union which unites a million, or a million and a half, transport workers. All of you,

learning the lessons of our revolution and of all preceding revolutions, must understand the difficulty of the present situation; and if you do not allow yourselves to be blinded by all sorts of slogans, such as "Freedom," "Constituent Assembly," "Free Soviets"—it is so easy to alter labels that Milyukov pretended to support the Soviets of the Kronstadt republic—if you do not close your eyes to the relation of class forces, you will acquire a sound and firm basis, a foundation for all your political conclusions. You will understand that we are passing through a period of crisis in which it will depend on us whether the proletarian revolution will march to victory as unswervingly as it has recently, or whether vacillations and waverings will facilitate the victory of the White Guards, which will not alleviate the situation, but will push Russia away from the revolution for many decades. The only conclusion you representatives of railway and water transport workers can and should draw is—a hundred times more proletarian solidarity and proletarian discipline. We must achieve this at all costs, comrades, and achieve victory.

SPEECH ON THE FOOD TAX

Delivered at a Meeting of Secretaries and Responsible Representatives of Nuclei of the R.C.P.(B.) of Moscow City and the Moscow Gubernia, April 9, 1921

COMRADES, on the question of the food tax and the change in our food policy, and also on the economic policy of the Soviet government, one hears the most varied opinions, which give rise to much confusion. Permit me, by arrangement with Comrade Kamenev, to divide our subjects in such a way that he will explain in detail the laws which have just been passed. This will be all the more expedient for the reason that Comrade Kamenev was the chairman of the commission appointed by the Central Committee of our Party, and later endorsed by the Council of People's Commissars, which at a number of conferences with representatives of the departments concerned drew up all the laws recently issued. The last of these laws was issued yesterday and you were able to read it in the newspapers today. There is no doubt that every one of these laws raises a number of practical questions, and not a little work will be required to enable all the local Party and Soviet workers to become sufficiently familiar with them and to devise the proper methods of applying them in their localities.

I should like to draw your attention to the general significance, or principle, of all these measures. How are we to explain the fact that the Soviet government and the dictatorship of the proletariat are taking the path of admitting a certain measure of free trade? To what extent can free trade and individual economy be permitted in conjunction with socialist economy? To what extent can we permit this revival of capitalism, which seems to be inevitable if we permit free trade, no matter how much it may be restricted? What called forth this change? What is its

real meaning, character and significance? And how should members of the Communist Party understand this change? How is it to be explained, and what are the limits to which it can be applied? This, approximately, is the task I have set myself.

The first question is, what called forth this change which to many seems to be too sharp and not sufficiently well grounded?

The fundamental and principal reason for the change is the extraordinarily acute crisis of peasant farming, the very difficult position it is in, a position which proved to be much more difficult in the spring of 1921 than could have been foreseen. On the other hand, the consequences of this position affected the restoration of our transport system as well as the restoration of our industry. I should like to observe that in speaking of substituting the food tax for the quotas, in discussing the significance of this change, most mistakes are made because it is not asked: What, properly speaking, is the nature of the change, and whither is it leading? An extraordinarily severe crisis of peasant farming, which after the ruin caused by the war was still further crushed by an extraordinarily severe failure of the harvest and shortage of fodder connected with it—for the failure also affected the hay crop—the dying of cattle, the weakening of the productive forces of peasant farming, which in many places was doomed to utter ruin—such is the picture of peasant farming in the spring of 1921. And here the question arises: What connection has this extraordinarily acute crisis of peasant farming with the abolition of the quotas which the Soviet government has undertaken? I ask that because, in order that this measure may be understood, it is first of all necessary to ask oneself: From what to what are we proceeding?

If a workers' revolution takes place in a country in which the peasant population predominates and the factories, works and railways pass into the hands of the working class, what, in essence, should be the economic relations between the working class and the peasantry? Obviously, they should be the following: the workers, producing in the factories and works, which now belong to them, all that is necessary for the country—and that means for the peasantry, which constitutes the majority of the popula-

tion—transport all these things on their railroads and river ships and deliver them to the peasantry; in return the workers obtain all the surplus agricultural produce. This is absolutely obvious and hardly requires any detailed explanation. When the food tax is discussed, however, this is constantly forgotten. But this should be borne in mind, because in order to explain the significance of the food tax, which is only a transitional measure, it is necessary to understand clearly what we want to achieve; and from what I have said it is clear that we want to and must achieve the position in which the peasants' produce shall be delivered to the workers' state not as surplus quotas, and not as a tax, but in exchange for all the goods the peasants require, and which are delivered to them by our transport system. On this basis the economy of a country which has adopted Socialism can be built up. If peasant farming can develop still further, we must firmly assure the transition to the next stage; and the next stage will undoubtedly be the gradual amalgamation of the least profitable and most backward, small and disintegrated peasant farming into social, large-scale agriculture. This is how Socialists have always pictured it. This is exactly how our Communist Party looks upon it. I repeat, the greatest source of error and confusion is that the food tax is appraised without allowance being made for the specific features of the transitional measures which are necessary in order that we may reach what we can and must reach.

What is the food tax? The food tax is a measure in which we see something of the past and something of the future. A tax is what the state takes from the population without recompense. If this tax is fixed at approximately one-half of what the food quota was fixed at last year, the tax alone will not be sufficient to enable the workers' state to maintain the Red Army, the whole of industry, the whole of the non-agricultural population, develop production, and develop intercourse with foreign countries, which we need so much in order to obtain machinery and equipment. On the one hand the workers' state wants to rely on the tax, fixed at approximately one-half of what the food quota was fixed at previously, and on the other hand, it wants to rely on the ex-

change of manufactured goods for the surplus products of peasant farming. Hence, the tax contains a particle of the previous quota and a particle of the system which is the only correct system, namely, the exchange of the manufactures of the big Socialist factories for the products of peasant farming through the medium of the state food supply organisations of the working class, through the medium of the workers' and peasants' co-operative societies.

The question arises, why are we compelled to resort to measures a particle of which belongs to the past and only a particle of which is put on proper lines?—we are not at all sure whether we shall be able to put it on proper lines immediately and whether the part we put on proper lines will be at all considerable. Why are we compelled to resort to such half-measures? Why should we count on such measures in our food and economic policy? What has called forth the necessity for these measures? Of course, everyone knows that they were not called forth by the Soviet government's preference for this or that policy. It was called forth by extreme need, by the hopelessness of the position. You know that for several years after the victory of the workers' revolution in Russia, after the imperialist war, we had to wage civil war, and we can now say without exaggeration that of all the countries that were dragged into the imperialist war, even those which suffered most because the war was waged on their territory, none suffered as much as Russia; for after four years of imperialist war we suffered three years of civil war, which in regard to the ruin, destruction and worsening of the conditions of production it caused, was much worse than a foreign war, because this war was waged in the centre of the country. This desperate ruin is the main reason why we at first, in the epoch of war, particularly when the civil war cut us off from grain districts like Siberia, the Caucasus and the whole of the Ukraine, and also cut off our supplies of coal and oil and diminished our possibilities of obtaining other forms of fuel—why we, living in a besieged fortress, could not maintain ourselves except by introducing quotas, *i.e.*, taking whatever surplus grain was available from the peasant, and sometimes not only surplus grain but part of what

was necessary for the peasant, in order to maintain the fighting fitness of the army and to prevent the utter collapse of industry. During the civil war this was an extraordinarily difficult problem, and in the opinion of all other parties it was an insoluble problem. Take the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, *i.e.*, the petty bourgeoisie and the kulak party. These parties shouted most of all in the most acute moments of the civil war that the Bolsheviks had undertaken a hare-brained task, and that it was impossible for them to hold out in the civil war when all the powers were assisting the White Guards. Indeed, the problem was an extraordinarily difficult one, calling for the exertion of all efforts; and it was successfully solved because of the, one might say, supernatural sacrifices which the working class and peasantry made at that time. The working class never suffered such underfeeding, such starvation as it did in the first years of its dictatorship. Naturally, there were no other means of solving this problem than the food quotas, *i.e.*, taking all the surplus grain and part of the necessary grain from the peasant. "You, too, starve a little, but together we shall save our cause and drive Denikin and Wrangel away"—no other solution was conceivable.

This was not an economic system, an economic plan of policy selected from a number of systems that might have been adopted. This was not the case. It was no use thinking of restoring industry when we could not ensure a minimum of food or fuel. The only task we set ourselves was to preserve the remnants of industry, to prevent the workers from dispersing altogether, and to have an army—and this could not be carried out in any other way than by quotas without remuneration, because paper currency is not remuneration, of course. We had no other way out. This is what we have departed from; what we are passing to I have already told you. How is this transition to be brought about? For this a measure like the tax is necessary. If it were possible to restore our industry faster, then perhaps, with a good harvest, we could more quickly proceed to the exchange of manufactured goods for the products of agriculture.

Many of you will probably remember that the question of passing to the economic front was put at the Ninth Congress

of the Party. At that time all attention was devoted to this question. We then thought that we had got rid of the war: had we not offered incredibly favourable peace terms to bourgeois Poland? As you know, peace was disrupted, and the Polish war and its continuation—Wrangel, etc.—followed. The period from the Ninth Congress to the Tenth Congress was almost entirely a period of war. You know that it was only recently that we signed a definite peace with the Poles; and only a few days ago we signed a peace treaty with the Turks which alone will rid us of interminable wars in the Caucasus. Only now have we concluded a trade agreement with England—which is of world significance. Only now has England been compelled to enter into commercial relations with us. America, for example, still refuses to do so. This will give you an idea of the difficulty with which we emerged from this war. Had we been able to realise the anticipations of the Ninth Congress of the Party, we would, of course, have been able to provide a much larger quantity of goods.

Comrade Korolev from Ivanovo-Voznesensk, our most industrial, proletarian, Red gubernia, visited me today. He quoted figures and facts. In the first year only six factories were in operation, and not a single one of them worked even a month without interruption. This was the complete cessation of industry. During the past year twenty-two factories were started for the first time; these worked several months, and some six months, without interruption. The plan of output was fixed at 150,000,000 arshins;¹ according to the latest figures they produced 117,000,000 arshins; they obtained only half the quantity of fuel that was allocated to them. That is how production plans were disrupted, not only in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, but all over Russia. This was due to a large extent to the disruption of peasant farming, to the dying of cattle, to the impossibility of transporting a sufficient quantity of wood fuel to the railway stations and steamship wharves. Owing to this, Ivanovo-Voznesensk obtained less wood fuel, less peat, and less oil than it should have obtained. The miracle is that, receiving only half the fuel they should have

¹ *Arshin*—about thirty inches.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

obtained, they turned out 117,000,000 arshins out of 150,000,000 provided for in the plan. They increased the productivity of labour and transferred the workers to the best factories; as a result they obtained a larger percentage of output. Here is a close and precise example which illustrates the position we were in. The Ninth Congress of the Party fixed the total output of textile goods at over 600,000,000 arshins, but we have not fulfilled a third of this because the Ivanovo-Voznesensk Gubernia, which proved to be the best, gave only 117,000,000 arshins. Picture to yourselves the millions of the population of Russia and these 117,000,000 arshins of cotton goods! This is beggary! The restoration of industry was delayed to such an enormous extent that in the spring of 1921 it seemed to be utterly impossible. We had to have an enormous army, and it was enlarged to several millions; owing to the dislocation of transport it was extremely difficult to demobilise it quickly in the winter. We succeeded in doing so only by an unprecedented exertion of effort.

That is the situation that was created. What other way out was there than reducing the quotas to the utmost limits, taking 240,000,000 poods of grain instead of 423,000,000. That is the least we must collect, given a medium harvest, in order to just barely feed ourselves. In order not to restrict ourselves to this we must give peasant farming an opportunity to revive. We must now take measures. The best measure, of course, would be to restore large-scale industry. Of course, that would be the best, the only economically correct measure—to increase the output of the factories and give the peasant a larger quantity of the things he requires, not only the cotton goods the worker and his family need, but also machines and implements, even if of the simplest kind, which the peasant needs so much. But what happened to the textile industry also happened to the iron and steel industry. That was the position we found ourselves in. We failed to restore industry after the Ninth Congress because the year of war, of the shortage of fuel, of the shortage of transport, and of the utmost decline of peasant farming befell us. What measures can be adopted to give the utmost assistance to peasant farming? No other measure except that of reducing the quotas and

transforming them into a tax which, given a medium harvest, will be fixed at 240,000,000 poods, and if there is a bad harvest at less perhaps, so that the peasant may know that he must give a certain amount fixed at the minimum figure, so that he may with the utmost zeal concentrate his efforts on production, so that all the products remaining after he has paid the tax may meet all his requirements and help to improve peasant farming not merely at the expense of industry—that would be the most proper thing, the most rational, but we lack the forces for this. The tax is fixed at the minimum figure, and the introduction of it in the districts will stimulate the restoration of small industry; for we cannot set large-scale industry to rights in the time we would like to do. This is proved by the way Ivanovo-Voznesensk, which gave the largest share of what we anticipated, fulfilled its programme. We must wait another year until stocks of fuel are sufficient to ensure the operation of all the factories. It will be a good thing if we succeed in doing it in a year, or even two years. Can we ensure supplies for the peasant? Had the harvest been a good one we could have done so.

When the question of the food tax was being decided at the Party congress a pamphlet was distributed written by Comrade Popov, the Director of our Central Statistical Board, on the production of grain in Russia. This pamphlet, somewhat enlarged, will be published within a few days, and all of you should read it. It gives an idea of grain production; the figures in it are calculated on the returns of the census which we carried out and which gave us precise figures of the whole population and an approximate estimate of the size of farms. In this pamphlet it is stated that with a yield of forty poods per dessiatin, peasant farming in the present territory of Soviet Russia could provide surplus grain amounting to 500,000,000 poods. If we could get that, we could fully cover all the requirements of the urban population amounting to 350,000,000 poods, and we would have a fund for foreign trade and for improving peasant farming. The harvest was so bad that we gathered not more than an average of twenty-eight poods per dessiatin. Thus we had a deficit. If we calculate, as the statisticians do, that we require eighteen poods

per head of the population, we must subtract three poods from each person and condemn every peasant to a certain amount of underfeeding in order to ensure an existence of semi-starvation for the army and industry. In this situation we could do nothing else but reduce the quotas to the utmost and transform them into a tax. We must exert all efforts and take care to improve small peasant farming. We could not give the peasant farmers cotton goods, machines, and other big factory goods; but we must solve this problem immediately, and we have to solve it with the aid of small industry. We should obtain results from the introduction of this new measure in the very first year.

Now, why is attention being concentrated most of all on peasant farming? Because it is only from peasant farming that we can obtain the food and fuel we need. The working class, if it wants to manage industry properly, as a ruling class, as a class that is exercising its dictatorship, must say: That was the weakest spot—the crisis of peasant farming; this must be remedied in order to set to work once again to restore large-scale industry and to secure that all seventy and not merely twenty-two factories shall be in operation in the Ivanovo-Voznesensk district. When that is done, factory goods will cover the requirements of the whole population, and food products will be taken from the peasant population, not in the form of a tax, but in exchange for manufactured goods, which the working class will provide. Such is the transition we are making in a period when we are obliged to spread out want and starvation, so that by making everybody go a little hungry we may save those without whom it is impossible to hold the remnants of the factories, the railways and the army for the purpose of resisting the White Guards.

Our quotas were furiously attacked by the Mensheviks, who said that the Soviet power gave the population nothing but quotas, want and destruction; that after the partial restoration of peace, after the civil war had come to an end, it was found impossible to restore our industry quickly. But even in the wealthiest countries it is calculated that it will take years before industry is restored. Even in a wealthy country like France it will take a long time before industry is restored, and France did not suffer as

much from the war as we did, because only a small part of that country was devastated. The astonishing thing is that we were able in the first year of an incomplete peace to start twenty-two factories out of seventy in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, and to produce 117,000,000 arshins of cotton goods out of an anticipated 150,000,000 arshins. The food quotas were inevitable in their time; but now we must change our food policy, *i.e.*, we must pass from the food quotas to the food tax. This will undoubtedly improve the position of the peasant, it will undoubtedly enable him to calculate more precisely, more definitely and with greater certainty that he will be able to exchange all his available surplus of grain at least for the manufactures of local handicraft industries. That is why this economic policy of the Soviet government is necessary.

Now in conclusion I want to deal with the question of how this policy can be reconciled with the point of view of Communism; and how it comes about that the Communist Soviet power is facilitating the development of free trade. Is this good from the point of view of Communism? In order to reply to this question we must carefully examine the changes that have taken place in peasant farming. At first the position was that we saw the whole of the peasantry fighting against the rule of the landlords. The landlords were equally opposed by the poor peasants and the kulaks, although each did so with different intentions: the kulaks fought with the intention of taking the land from the landlords and developing their kulak farming on it. Then it was revealed that the kulaks and the poor peasants had different interests and different aims. Even today we see this difference of interests much more clearly in the Ukraine than here. The poor peasants could obtain very little direct advantage from the transfer of the land from the landlords to the peasants because they had neither the materials nor the implements. And we saw the poor peasants organising to prevent the kulaks from seizing the land that had been taken from the landlords. The Soviet government assisted the Committees of Poor Peasants that sprang up in Russia and in the Ukraine. What was the result? The result was that the middle peasants became the predominant element in the rural districts. We know this from statistics, and every one who lives in

the country knows it from his own observations. The extremes of kulaks and poor have diminished; the majority of the population has come nearer to the position of the middle peasant. If we want to raise the productivity of our peasant farming we must first of all reckon with the middle peasant. It was in accordance with this circumstance that the Communist Party had to mould its policy.

Since the countryside has become middle peasant, we must help the middle peasant to improve his farming; moreover, we must put the same demands to him as we put to the workers. The principal question discussed at the last Party congress was that of production propaganda: all forces to be concentrated on the economic front; raise the productivity of labour and increase output! Unless these tasks are fulfilled no progress is possible. If we say this to the worker, we must say the same thing to the peasant. The state will take a definite tax from the peasant, but in return the state demands that after paying the tax the peasant enlarge his farm, knowing that no more will be taken from him and that he will retain possession of the whole of his surplus to develop his farm. Thus, the change in policy towards the peasantry is to be explained by the change in the position of the peasantry. The countryside has become more middle peasant, and in order to increase the productive forces we must reckon with this.

And now I will remind you that in 1918, after the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk Peace, I had occasion to argue with the so-called "Left Communist" group.¹ Those who were in the Party at that time will remember that certain Communists feared that the signing of the Brest Peace would disrupt all Communist policy. In the course of the argument with these comrades I said, among other things: State capitalism is nothing to be afraid of in Russia, it would be a step forward.² This sounded very strange: how could state capitalism be a step forward in a Soviet, Socialist republic? And, replying to this, I said: Look carefully; what do we observe in Russia from the point of view of real economic relations? We observe at least five different social systems, or

¹ See "'Left-Wing' Childishness and Petty-Bourgeois Mentality," and the corresponding explanatory notes, in *Selected Works*, Vol. VII.—Ed.

² *Ibid.*, p. 364.—Ed.

economic systems, and, counting from below upwards, we find that they are the following: first, patriarchal economy, that is, when peasant farming produces only for its own needs, or when it is in a nomadic or semi-nomadic state, and we have any number of these; second, small commodity production, when goods are sold on the market; third, capitalist production, that is, when the capitalists, small private capital, appear; fourth, state capitalism, and fifth, Socialism.¹ And if we look closely we shall have to say that even today we see all these relations in the economic system, in the economic structure of Russia. We cannot under any circumstances forget what we very often observe, *viz.*, the Socialist relations of the workers in factories belonging to the state, when they themselves collect fuel, raw material and food, or when the workers try properly to distribute manufactured goods among the peasantry and to deliver them by means of the transport system. This is Socialism. But side by side with it there is small economy, which very often exists independently of it. Why can it exist independently of it? Because large-scale industry has not been restored, because the Socialist factories can receive only one-tenth, perhaps, of what they should receive; and in so far as they do not receive what they require, small economy remains independent of the Socialist factories. The incredible state of ruin of the country, the shortage of fuel, raw materials and transport facilities, leads to small production existing separately from Socialism. And I ask: Under these circumstances, what is state capitalism? It is the amalgamation of small production. Capital amalgamates small production, capital grows out of small production. It is no use closing our eyes to this fact. Of course, free trade means the growth of capitalism; one cannot get away from it. And whoever thinks of getting away from it and brushing it aside is only consoling himself with words. If small economy exists, if free exchange exists, capitalism will appear. But does this capitalism hold out any terrors for us if we hold the factories, works, transport and foreign trade in our hands? And so I said then, and will say now, and I think it is incontrovertible, that

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 361.—*Ed.*

this capitalism has no terrors for us. Concessions are capitalism of that kind.

We are making intense efforts to conclude concession agreements; unfortunately, we have not concluded any up to now. Nevertheless, we are nearer to them now than we were several months ago, when we last talked about concessions. What are concessions from the point of view of economic relationships? They are state capitalism. The Soviet government concludes an agreement with a capitalist. According to that agreement the latter is provided with a certain quantity of articles: raw materials, mines, hunting and fishing territories, minerals, or, as was the case in one of the last proposals for a concession, even a special factory (the proposal to grant the Swedish ball-bearing plant as a concession). The Socialist state grants the capitalist means of production that belong to it: factories, materials, mines; the capitalist works in the capacity of an agent, as a leaseholder of Socialist means of production, obtains profit on his capital and delivers to the Socialist state part of his output.

Why do we need this? Because we immediately receive an increased quantity of products, and this we need because we ourselves are unable to manufacture them. And so we get state capitalism. Should it frighten us? No, it should not, because we shall determine to what extent we shall grant concessions. Take oil concessions. That will give us at once millions of poods of kerosene, more than we ourselves produce. This is to our advantage, because in exchange for this kerosene, not for paper money, the peasant will give us his grain surplus, and we shall immediately be able to improve the position of the whole country. That is why the capitalism that will inevitably grow out of free trade has no terrors for us. It will be the result of the development of trade, the result of the exchange of manufactured goods, even though produced by small industry, for agricultural produce.

From the law that was passed yesterday you will learn that the workers in certain branches of industry are to be permitted to obtain a certain part of the articles manufactured in their factories in the form of a bonus in kind which they can exchange for grain. For example, on the condition that they cover the re-

quirements of the state, the textile workers will receive a part of the textile goods they manufacture and will be able to exchange them for grain themselves. We must do this in order to improve the conditions of the workers and the conditions of the peasants more quickly. We could not do this on a nation-wide scale, but we must do it, come what may. That is why we do not in the least close our eyes to the fact that, to a certain extent, free trade means the development of capitalism, and we say: This capitalism will be under the control, under the surveillance of the state. Since the workers' state has taken possession of the factories, works and railways, this capitalism has no terrors for us. It will help to improve the economic exchange of peasant produce for the manufactures of neighbouring handicraftsmen, who, although they will not cover the peasants' requirements of manufactured goods to a very large extent, will nevertheless cover them to some extent; peasant economy will improve compared to what it was before, and it desperately needs improvement. Let small industry expand to some extent, let state capitalism expand—the Soviet power need not fear that; it must look things straight in the face and call things by their proper names; but it must control this, determine its limits.

Concessions need not frighten us; if we give concessionaires a few factories and retain most of them in our own hands, there is nothing terrible about it. Of course, it would be absurd for the Soviet government to distribute the greater part of what belongs to it in the form of concessions; this would not be concessions, but reversion to capitalism. There is nothing to be afraid of in concessions as long as we retain possession of all the state enterprises and weigh up exactly and strictly the terms and scale on which we grant concessions. Growing capitalism will be under control, under supervision, while political power will remain in the hands of the working class and of the workers' state. The capital which will exist in the form of concessions and the capital which will inevitably grow through the medium of the co-operatives, through the medium of free trade, has no terrors for us; we must try to develop and improve the position of the peasantry; we must exert all our efforts to make this benefit the working class.

We shall be able to do all that can be done to improve peasant farming and to develop the local apparatus more quickly with concessions than without them—while at the same time planning our national economy in such a way that large-scale Socialist industry shall be restored more quickly than hitherto—we shall be able to do this more quickly with the aid of a rested and recuperated peasant economy than with the absolutely poverty-stricken peasant farming we have had up to now.

This is what I have to say on the question of how to appraise this policy from the Communist point of view, of why it is necessary, and why, if properly applied, it will bring improvement immediately, or, at all events, much more quickly than if we did not apply it.

THE FOOD TAX

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW POLICY AND ITS CONDITIONS

IN LIEU OF AN INTRODUCTION

THE question of the food tax is at present attracting considerable attention and is giving rise to much discussion and argument. This is quite natural, because this is one of the principal questions of policy under present conditions.

The discussion bears a rather hurly-burly character. For quite understandable reasons we all suffer from this. All the more useful would it be, therefore, to try to approach this question, not from its "topical" side, but from the side of general principle. In other words, let us look into the general, fundamental background of the picture on which we are now tracing the pattern of the definite practical measures of policy of the present day.

In order to make this attempt I will take the liberty of quoting a long passage from my pamphlet *The Principal Task of Our Day—"Left-Wing" Childishness and Petty-Bourgeois Mentality*.¹ This pamphlet was published by the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in 1918 and contains, first, a newspaper article dated March 11, 1918, on the Brest Peace, and, second, my controversy with the then-existing group of Left Communists, dated May 5, 1918. The controversy is superfluous now and so I delete it. I leave in what applies to the discussion about "state capitalism" and the main elements of our contemporary economics, the transitional economics from capitalism to socialism.

This is what I wrote at that time:

¹ *Selected Works*, Vol. VII.—Ed.

THE CONTEMPORARY ECONOMICS OF RUSSIA

(Extract from pamphlet of 1918)

"State capitalism would be an *advance* on the present state of affairs in our Soviet Republic. If we introduced state capitalism in approximately six months' time we would achieve a great success and a sure guarantee that within a year Socialism will have gained a permanently firm hold and will have become invincible in our country.

"I can imagine with what noble indignation some people will recoil from these words. . . . What! The transition to state *capitalism* in the Soviet Socialist Republic a step forward? . . . Isn't this the betrayal of Socialism?"

". . . And that is why we must deal with this point in greater detail.

"In the first place we must understand what exactly is the nature of the *transition* from capitalism to Socialism which gives us the right and the grounds on which to call our country the Socialist Republic of Soviets.

"Secondly, we must expose the error of those who fail to recognise the petty-bourgeois economic conditions and the petty-bourgeois element as the *principal* enemy of Socialism in our country.

"Thirdly, we must clearly understand the significance of the economic difference between the *Soviet* state and the bourgeois state.

"Let us examine these three points.

"No one, I think, in studying the question of the economics of Russia has denied their transitional character. Nor, I think, has any Communist denied that the term 'Socialist Soviet Republic' implies the determination of the Soviet government to achieve the transition to Socialism, and not that the present economic order is a Socialist order.

"But what does the word transition mean? Does it not mean, as applied to economics, that the present order contains elements, particles, pieces of both capitalism *and* Socialism? Everyone will admit that it does. But not all who admit this take the trouble to

consider the precise nature of the elements that constitute the various social-economic forms which exist in Russia at the present time. And this is the crux of the question.

"Let us enumerate these elements:

"1) patriarchal, *i.e.*, to a considerable extent natural, self-sufficing peasant economy;

"2) small commodity production (this includes the majority of those peasants who sell their grain);

"3) private capitalism;

"4) state capitalism, and

"5) Socialism.

"Russia is so vast and so varied that all these different types of social-economic forms are intermingled. This is what constitutes the peculiar feature of the situation.

"The question arises: what elements preponderate? Clearly, in a small-peasant country, the preponderating element must be the petty-bourgeois element, nor can it be otherwise, for the majority, and the great majority of the tillers of the soil are small commodity producers. Hence, the shell of state capitalism (grain monopoly, state-controlled producers and traders, bourgeois co-operators) is pierced, now in one place, now in another, by *profiteers*, and the chief object of profiteering is *grain*.

"It is precisely in this field that the struggle is mainly proceeding. Between what elements is this struggle being waged, if we are to speak in terms of economic categories such as 'state capitalism'? Between the fourth and the fifth in the order in which I have just enumerated? Of course not. It is not state capitalism that is at war with Socialism; it is the petty bourgeoisie plus private capitalism fighting against both state capitalism and Socialism. The petty bourgeoisie oppose *every kind* of state interference, regulation and control, whether it be state capitalist or state Socialist. This is an absolutely incontrovertible fact of our reality, the failure to understand which lies at the root of a number of mistakes in economics. The profiteer, the trade marauder, the disrupter of monopoly—these are our principal 'internal' enemies, the enemies of the economic enactments of the Soviet government. A hundred and twenty-five years ago it might have been excusable for the

French petty bourgeois, the most ardent and sincere of revolutionaries, to endeavour to crush the profiteer by executing a few of the 'chosen' ones and by thunderous declamations; but today the purely rhetorical attitude to this question assumed by some Left Socialist-Revolutionaries can rouse nothing but disgust and revulsion in an intelligent revolutionary. We know perfectly well that the economic basis of profiteering is the small proprietors, who are unusually widespread in Russia, and private capitalism, of which *every* petty bourgeois is an agent. We know that the million tentacles of this petty-bourgeois hydra encircle first one and then another section of the working class, that *instead of state monopoly*, profiteering forces its way through all the pores of our social and economic organism.

"Those who fail to see this show by their blindness that they are captives to petty-bourgeois prejudices. . . ."

"The petty bourgeois has money put away, several thousands gained by 'honest' and especially by dishonest means, during the war. This is the economic type, the characteristic type, that serves as the basis of profiteering and private capitalism. Money is a certificate entitling the possessor to receive social wealth; and a vast stratum of small proprietors, numbering millions, cling to this certificate, conceal it from the 'state.' They do not believe in Socialism or Communism, and 'sit tight' until the proletarian storm blows over. Either we subordinate this petty bourgeoisie to *our* control and accounting (we can do this if we organise the poor, that is, the majority of the population, or semi-proletariat, round the politically conscious proletarian vanguard), or they will overthrow our workers' government as surely and as inevitably as the revolution was overthrown by the Napoleons and Cavaignacs who sprang from this very soil of small ownership. This is how the question stands. . . ."

"The petty bourgeoisie, hoarding their thousands, are the enemies of state capitalism. They want to use their thousands for themselves, against the poor, in the teeth of all state control. And the sum total of these thousands, amounting to many billions, forms the basis of the profiteering which is disrupting our Socialist construction. Let us suppose that a given number of workers

produce in a certain number of days goods to the value of, say, 1,000. Suppose, further, that of this total, 200 is lost to us as a result of petty profiteering, embezzlement and the small proprietors 'evading' Soviet decrees and regulations. Every politically conscious worker will say: If better order and organisation could be obtained at the price of 300 I would willingly give 300 instead of 200 out of the 1,000, for it will be easy under the Soviet government to reduce this 'tribute' to 100 or to 50 later on, when order and organisation are established and the petty-bourgeois disruption of state monopoly is finally stopped.

"This simple illustration in figures—which I have deliberately simplified to the utmost in order to make it absolutely clear—explains the present *correlation* of state capitalism and Socialism. The workers hold political power; they have every legal opportunity of 'taking' the whole thousand, *i.e.*, without giving up a single kopek, except for Socialist purposes. This legal opportunity, which rests upon the actual transition of power to the workers, is an element of Socialism. But in many ways, the small-owner and private capitalist element undermines this legal position, drags in profiteering, hinders the execution of Soviet decrees. State capitalism would be a gigantic step forward *even if* we paid *more* than we are paying at present (I took this numerical example deliberately to bring this out more sharply), for it is worth while paying for 'tuition,' because it is profitable for the workers, because victory over disorder, ruin and slackness is the most important thing; because the continuation of small-owner anarchy is the greatest, the most serious danger which threatens us and which will *certainly* be our ruin unless we overcome it. On the other hand, not only will the payment of a heavier tribute to state capitalism not ruin us, it will lead us to Socialism by the surest road. When the working class has learnt how to defend the state system against small-owner anarchy, when it has learnt to build up a great, nation-wide, state organisation of production on state capitalist lines, it will have, if I may use the expression, all the trump cards in its hands, and the consolidation of Socialism will be assured.

"In the first place, *economically*, state capitalism is immeasurably superior to the present system of economy,

"In the second place, the Soviet power has nothing to fear from it; for the Soviet state is a state in which the power of the workers and the poor is assured. . . ."

* * *

"To elucidate the question still more, let us first of all take the most concrete example of state capitalism. Everybody knows what this example is. It is Germany. Here we have 'the last word' in modern large-scale capitalist technique and planned organisation, *subordinated to Junker-bourgeois imperialism*. Cross out the words in italics, and, in place of the militarist, *Junker-bourgeois imperialist state*, put a *state*, but of a different social type, of a different class content—a *Soviet*, that is, a proletarian state, and you will have the *sum total* of the conditions necessary for Socialism. .

"Socialism is inconceivable without large-scale capitalist technique based on the last word of modern science; it is inconceivable without planned state organisation which subjects tens of millions of people to the strictest observance of a single standard in production and distribution. We Marxists have always insisted on this, and it is not worth while wasting two seconds talking to people who do not understand *even* this (anarchists and a good half of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries).

"At the same time Socialism is inconceivable unless the proletariat is the ruler of the state. This also is A B C. And history (which nobody, except Menshevik blockheads of the first rank, ever expected to bring about 'complete' Socialism smoothly, gently, easily and simply) took such an original course that it *brought forth* in 1918 two unconnected halves of Socialism existing side by side like two future chickens in the single shell of international imperialism. In 1918 Germany and Russia were the embodiment of the most striking material realisation of the economic, productive and social-economic conditions for Socialism on the one hand, and the political conditions, on the other.

"A successful proletarian revolution in Germany would immediately and very easily shatter the shell of imperialism (which unfortunately is made of the best steel, and hence cannot be broken by the efforts of *any and every* . . . chicken), it would

bring about the victory of world Socialism for certain, without any difficulty, or with slight difficulty—if, of course, by ‘difficulty’ we mean difficult on a world-historical scale, and not in the philistine-circle sense.

“While the revolution in Germany is slow in ‘coming forth’ our task is to *study* the state capitalism of the Germans, to spare *no effort* in copying it and not shrink from adopting dictatorial methods to hasten the copying of Western culture by barbarian Russia; and not hesitate to use barbarous methods in fighting against barbarism. If there are anarchists and Left Socialist-Revolutionaries (I suddenly recall the speeches of Karclín and Ge on the C.E.C.) who indulge in Narcissus-like reflections and say that it is unbecoming for us, revolutionaries, to ‘take lessons’ from German imperialism, there is only one thing we can say in reply to this: *viz.*, the revolution would perish irrevocably (and deservedly) if we took these people seriously.

“At present, petty-bourgeois capitalism prevails in Russia, and it is *one and the same road* that leads from it to large-scale state capitalism *and* to Socialism, through *one and the same* intermediary station called ‘national accounting and control of production and distribution.’ Those who fail to understand this are committing an unpardonable mistake in economics. Either they do not know the facts of reality, do not see what actually exists and are unable to look the truth in the face; or they confine themselves to abstractly comparing ‘capitalism’ with ‘Socialism’ and fail to study the concrete forms and stages of the transition that is taking place in our country.

“Let it be said in parenthesis that this is the very theoretical mistake which misled the best people in the *Novaya Zhizn* and *Vperyod* camp. The worst and the mediocre of these, owing to their stupidity and spinelessness, drag at the tail of the bourgeoisie, of whom they stand in awe. The best of them failed to understand that it was not without reason that the teachers of Socialism spoke of a whole period of transition from capitalism to Socialism and emphasised the ‘prolonged birth pangs’ of the new social order. And this new order is an abstraction which can come into being

only by passing through a series of varied, imperfect, concrete attempts to create this or that Socialist state.

"It is precisely because Russia cannot advance economically without traversing the ground *that is common* to state capitalism and to Socialism (national accounting and control) that the attempt to frighten others as well as themselves with the bogey of 'evolution *towards* state capitalism' is utter theoretical nonsense. To talk nonsense of this sort is to let one's thoughts wander *away from* the true road of 'evolution,' is to fail to understand what this road is. In practice it is equivalent to *dragging back* to small-owner capitalism.

"In order to convince the reader that this is not the first time I have given this 'high' appreciation of state capitalism and that I gave it *before* the Bolsheviks seized power I take the liberty of quoting the following passage from my pamphlet *The Threatening Catastrophe and How To Fight It*,¹ written in September 1917.

'But try to substitute for the *Junker-capitalist* state, for the landlord-capitalist state, a *revolutionary-democratic* state (i.e., such as will destroy all privileges in a revolutionary way, without being afraid of introducing in a revolutionary way the fullest possible democracy), and you will see that, in a truly revolutionary-democratic state, state monopoly capitalism inevitably and unavoidably means progress towards Socialism!

'For socialism is nothing but the next step forward after state capitalist monopoly.

'State monopoly capitalism is the fullest *material* preparation for Socialism, it is its *threshold*, it is that rung on the historical ladder between which and the rung called Socialism there are *no intervening rungs*.'

"Please note that this was written when Kerensky was in power, that we are discussing *not* the dictatorship of the proletariat, *not* the Socialist state, but the 'revolutionary-democratic' state. Is it not clear that the *higher* we stand on this political ladder, *the more completely* we incorporate the Socialist state and the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviets, *the less ought* we to fear 'state capitalism'? Is it not clear that from the *material*, economic and productive point of view, we are not yet 'on the threshold' of Socialism? And how otherwise than by way of this 'threshold,' which we have not yet reached, shall we pass through the door of Socialism? . . ."

* * *

¹ *Collected Works*, Vol. XXI.—Ed.

"The following is also extremely instructive.

"In our controversy with Comrade Bukharin on the C.E.C., he declared, among other things, that on the question of high salaries for specialists 'we' 'were more to the Right than Lenin,' for in this case we see no deviation from principle, bearing in mind that Marx said that under certain conditions it is more expedient for the working class to 'buy off this gang' (that is, the gang of capitalists, *i.e.*, to *buy from* the bourgeoisie the land, factories, works and other means of production).

"This is an extremely interesting statement. . . ."

"Let us consider Marx's idea carefully.

"Marx was discussing England of the seventies of the last century, of the culminating period in the development of pre-monopoly capitalism. At that time England was a country in which militarism and bureaucracy were less pronounced than in any other, a country in which there was the greatest possibility of a 'peaceful' victory for Socialism by the workers 'buying out' the bourgeoisie. And Marx says: Under certain conditions the workers will certainly not refuse to buy off the bourgeoisie. Marx did not commit himself—or the future leaders of the Socialist revolution—to matters of form, to methods and ways of bringing about the revolution; for he understood perfectly well that a vast number of new problems would arise, that the whole situation would change in the process of the revolution, and that the situation would change *radically* and *often* in the process of revolution.

"Well, and what about Soviet Russia? *After* the seizure of power by the proletariat, *after* the crushing of the armed resistance and sabotage of the exploiters—is it not clear that *certain* conditions prevail which correspond to those which might have existed in England half a century ago had a peaceful transition to Socialism begun then? The subordination of the capitalists to the workers in England would have been assured at that time owing to the following circumstances: 1) the absolute preponderance of workers, *i.e.*, proletarians, in the population owing to the absence of a peasantry (in England in the 'seventies there was every hope of an extremely rapid spread of Socialism among agricultural labourers); 2) the excellent organisation of the proletariat in trade

unions (England was at that time the leading country in the world in this respect); 3) the comparatively high level of culture of the proletariat, which had been trained by centuries of development of political liberty; 4) the old habit of the well-organised English capitalists of settling political and economic questions by compromise—at that time the English capitalists were better organised than the capitalists of any country in the world (this superiority has now passed to Germany). These were the circumstances which at that time gave rise to the idea that the *peaceful* subjugation of the English capitalists by the workers was possible.

“In Soviet Russia, at the present time, this subjugation is assured by certain premises of fundamental significance (the victory in November [October] and the suppression, from November [October] to February, of the armed and sabotaging resistance of the capitalists). But *instead* of the absolute preponderance of workers, that is, of proletarians, in the population, and a high degree of organisation among them, the important factor of victory in Russia was the support the proletarians received from the poorest and quickly pauperised peasantry. Finally, we have neither a high degree of culture nor the habit of compromise. If these concrete conditions are carefully considered it will become clear that we can and ought to employ two methods *simultaneously*, *i.e.*, the ruthless suppression of the uncultured capitalists, who refuse to have anything to do with ‘state capitalism’ or to consider any form of compromise, and who continue by means of profiteering, by bribing the poor peasantry, etc., to hinder the application of the measures taken by the Soviets; and the *method of compromise*, or buying off the cultured capitalists, who agree with ‘state capitalism,’ who are capable of putting it into practice and who are useful to the proletariat as clever and experienced organisers of the largest types of enterprises, which supply commodities to tens of millions of people.

“Bukharin is a well-educated Marxian economist. Hence, he remembered that Marx was profoundly right when he taught the workers the importance of preserving the organisation of large-scale production precisely for the purpose of facilitating the transition

to Socialism and that (as *an exception*, and England was then an exception) the idea was conceivable of *paying the capitalists well*, of buying them out, if the circumstances were such as to compel the capitalists to submit peacefully and to come over to Socialism in a cultured and organised fashion, provided they were bought out.

"But Bukharin fell into error because he did not study sufficiently the concrete peculiarity of the situation in Russia at the present time—an exceptional situation. We, the Russian proletariat, are in *advance* of England or Germany as regards our political order, as regards the strength of the political power of the workers; but we are *behind* the most backward West European country as regards well-organised state capitalism, as regards our level of culture and the degree of material and productive preparedness for the 'introduction' of Socialism. Is it not clear that the peculiar nature of the present situation creates the need for a peculiar type of 'buying out,' which the workers should offer to the most cultured, the most skilled, the most capable organisers among the capitalists who are ready to enter the service of the Soviet government and to help honestly in organising 'state' industry on the largest possible scale? Is it not clear that in such a peculiar situation we must make every effort to avoid two mistakes, both of which are of a petty-bourgeois nature? On the one hand, it would be an irretrievable mistake to declare that since there is a discrepancy between our economic 'forces' and our political forces, it 'follows' that we should not have seized power. Such an argument can be advanced only by a 'man in a muffler'¹ who forgets that there will always be such a 'discrepancy,' that it always exists in the development of nature as well as in the development of society, that only by a series of attempts—each of which, taken by itself, will be one-sided, will suffer from certain inconsistencies—will victorious Socialism be created by the revolutionary co-operation of the proletariat of *all* countries.

"On the other hand, it would be an obvious mistake to give free rein to shouters and phrasemongers, who allow themselves to be

¹ A character in a story by Chekhov, typifying the timid, conservative bureaucrat—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

attracted by 'dazzling' revolutionism, but who are incapable of sustained, thoughtful and deliberate revolutionary work which takes into account the most difficult stages of transition.

"Fortunately, the history of the development of the revolutionary parties and of the struggle Bolshevism waged against them¹ has left us a heritage of sharply defined types; of these, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and anarchists are striking examples of bad revolutionaries. They are now shouting—shouting hysterically, shouting themselves hoarse—against the 'compromise' of the 'Right Bolsheviks.' But they are incapable of thinking *why* 'compromise' is bad, and *why* 'compromise' has been justly condemned by history and the course of the revolution.

"Compromise in Kerensky's time surrendered power to the imperialist bourgeoisie, and the question of power is the fundamental question of every revolution. The compromise of a section of the Bolsheviks in October-November 1917 either feared the seizure of power by the proletariat or wished to *share* power equally, not only with 'unreliable fellow-travellers' like the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, but also with the enemy, with the Chernovists and the Mensheviks, who would inevitably have hindered us in fundamental matters, such as the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, the ruthless suppression of the Bogayevskys, the complete establishment of the Soviet institutions, and in every act of confiscation.

"Now power has been seized, retained and consolidated in the hands of a single party, the party of the proletariat, even without the 'unreliable fellow-travellers.' To speak of compromises at the present time when there is no question, and can be none, of sharing *power*, of renouncing the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, is merely to repeat, parrot-fashion, words which have been learnt by heart, but not understood. To describe as 'compromise' the fact that, having arrived at a situation when we can and must rule the country, we try to win over to our side, not grudging the cost, the most cultured elements capitalism has trained, to take them into our service against small-proprietor disintegration—to

¹ Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and anarchists.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

describe this as compromise reveals a total incapacity to think out the economic problems of Socialist construction.”

THE FOOD TAX, FREE TRADE AND CONCESSIONS

In the arguments of 1918 quoted above there are a number of mistakes as regards periods. The periods turned out to be longer than was anticipated at that time. This is not surprising. But the main elements of our economics have remained the same. In a very large number of cases the peasant “poor” (proletarians and semi-proletarians) have become middle peasants. This has caused an increase in the small-proprietor, petty-bourgeois “element.” The civil war of 1918-20 greatly intensified the ruin of the country, retarded the restoration of its productive forces, and bled the proletariat more than any other class. To this was added the failure of the harvest of 1920, the fodder shortage and the dying of cattle, which still further retarded the restoration of transport and industry, because it affected the delivery of wood—our main fuel—on peasants’ horses and carts.

As a result, the political situation in the spring of 1921 was such that immediate, resolute and very urgent measures had to be taken to improve the conditions of the peasantry and to increase its productive forces.

Why the peasantry and not the workers?

Because in order to improve the conditions of the workers, grain and fuel are required. This is the biggest “hitch” at the present time, from the point of view of national economy as a whole. And it is impossible to increase the production and collection of grain and the collection and delivery of fuel except by improving the position of the peasantry, by raising their productive forces. It is necessary to start with the peasantry. Those who fail to understand this, those who are inclined to regard this putting of the peasantry in the forefront as the “renunciation,” or something similar to the renunciation, of the dictatorship of the proletariat, simply do not stop to think, and yield to the power of phrases. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the guidance of policy by the proletariat. The proletariat, as the leading, ruling class, must be

able to guide policy in such a way as to solve first the most urgent, the most "vexing" problem. The most urgent thing at the present time is the adoption of measures to raise the productive forces of peasant farming immediately. Only in *this way* will it be possible to improve the conditions of the workers and strengthen the alliance between the workers and peasants, to strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletarian or representative of the proletariat who *refused* to improve the conditions of the workers in *this way* would *in fact* prove himself to be an accomplice of the White Guards and the capitalists; because to refuse to do it in this way would mean putting the craft interests of the workers above class interests, would mean sacrificing the interests of the whole of the working class, of its dictatorship, its alliance with the peasantry against the landlords and capitalists, its leading role in the struggle for the emancipation of labour from the yoke of capital, for the sake of the immediate, momentary and partial benefit of the workers.

Thus, the first thing required is immediate and serious measures to raise the productive forces of the peasantry.

This cannot be done without a serious modification of our food policy. Such a modification was the substitution of the food tax for the quotas, the former to be connected with free trade, at least in local economic turnover, after the tax has been paid.

What, in essence, is the substitution of the food tax for the quotas?

Wrong ideas are widespread concerning this point. These wrong ideas are due mainly to the fact that no attempt is made to study the essence of the change; it is not asked from what to what the change is being made. It is imagined that the change is from Communism in general to the bourgeois system in general. In opposition to this mistake, one must inevitably refer to what was said in May 1918.

The food tax is one of the forms of transition from the peculiar "War Communism" which was thrust upon us by extreme want, ruin and war to the proper Socialist interchange of products. The latter, in its turn, is one of the forms of transition from Socialism,

with the peculiar features created by the predominance of the small peasantry among the population, to Communism.

The essence of the peculiar "War Communism" was that practically we took all the surplus grain—and sometimes even not only surplus grain, but part of the grain the peasant required for food—for the purpose of meeting the requirements of the army and of sustaining the workers. Most often we took the grain on loan, for paper money. Had we not done that we would have been unable to vanquish the landlords and the capitalists in a ruined small-peasant country. And the fact that we were victorious (in spite of the assistance our exploiters obtained from the most powerful countries of the world) not only shows what miracles of heroism the workers and peasants are capable of in the struggle for their emancipation; it also shows the role of lackeys of the bourgeoisie that the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Kautsky and Co. played when they *blamed us* for this "War Communism." It should be put to our credit.

But it is no less necessary to know the real dimensions of the service that stands to our credit. "War Communism" was thrust upon us by war and ruin. It was not, nor could it be, a policy that corresponded to the economic tasks of the proletariat. It was a temporary measure. The correct policy of the proletariat which is exercising its dictatorship in a small-peasant country is to obtain grain in exchange for the manufactured goods the peasant requires. Only such a food policy corresponds to the tasks of the proletariat; only such a policy can strengthen the foundations of Socialism and lead to its complete victory.

The food tax is the transition to this. We are still in such a state of ruin, so crushed by the burden of war (the war of yesterday and the war which, owing to the rapacity and fury of the capitalists, may break out tomorrow) that we cannot give the peasant manufactured goods for *all* the grain we require. Knowing this, we are introducing the food tax, *i.e.*, we shall take the minimum of grain we require (for the army and the workers) in the form of a tax and will obtain the rest in exchange for manufactured goods.

However, we must not forget the following. Our poverty and ruin are so great that we cannot restore large-scale, factory, state Socialist production *at one stroke*. To restore our industry we must accumulate large stocks of grain and fuel in the big industrial centres, we must replace the worn-out machines with new ones, and so on. Experience has convinced us that this cannot be done at one stroke, and we know that after the ruinous imperialist war even the wealthiest and most advanced countries will be able to solve this problem only in the course of a long period of years. Hence, it is necessary, to a certain extent, to help to restore *small* industry, which does not need machines, does not need either state reserves or large stocks of raw material, fuel and food, and which can immediately render some assistance to peasant farming and raise its productive forces.

What will be the effect of this?

The effect will be the revival of the petty bourgeoisie and of capitalism on the basis of a certain amount of free trade (if only local). This is beyond doubt. It would be ridiculous to close our eyes to it.

The question arises, is it necessary? Can it be justified? Is it not dangerous?

Many questions like this are asked, and in the majority of cases they merely reveal the simplicity, to put it mildly, of those who ask them.

Examine the way I in May 1918 defined the existence in our economics of the elements (constituent parts) of the various social-economic systems. No one will be able to refute the existence of all these five stages (or constituent parts), of all these five systems—from the patriarchal, *i.e.*, semi-savage, to the Socialist system. It is self-evident that the small-peasant “system,” partly patriarchal, partly petty-bourgeois, predominates in a small-peasant country. If exchange exists, the development of small economy is petty-bourgeois development, it is capitalist development—this is an incontrovertible truth, an elementary truth of political economy, confirmed, moreover, by the everyday experience and observation of even the ordinary man in the street.

What policy can the Socialist proletariat pursue in the face of this economic reality? To give the small peasant *all* he needs of the manufactures produced by large-scale Socialist industries in exchange for his grain and raw materials? This would be the most desirable and the most "correct" policy—this is the policy we have started. But we cannot give *all* the manufactures, very far from it; nor shall we be able to do so very soon—at all events we shall not be able to do so until we complete the first stage of the electrification of the whole country. What is to be done? Either to try to prohibit entirely, to lock up, all development of private, non-state exchange, *i.e.*, trade, *i.e.*, capitalism, which is inevitable amidst millions of small producers. But such a policy would be foolish and suicidal for the party that tried to apply it. It would be foolish because such a policy is economically impossible; it would be suicidal because the party that tried to apply such a policy would meet with inevitable disaster. We need not conceal from ourselves the fact that some Communists sinned "in thought, word and deed" in this respect and dropped precisely into *such* a policy. We shall try to rectify these mistakes. We must rectify them without fail, otherwise things will go badly with us.

Or (and this is the last *possible* and the only sensible policy) not to try to prohibit, or lock up, the development of capitalism, but to try to direct it into the channels of *state capitalism*. This is economically possible, for state capitalism—in one form or another, to some degree or other—exists wherever the element of free trade and capitalism in general exists.

Can the Soviet state, the dictatorship of the proletariat, be combined, united with state capitalism; are they compatible?

Of course they are. This is exactly what I argued in May 1918. I hope I proved it in May 1918. More than that, I then proved that state capitalism is a step forward compared with the small-proprietor (both small patriarchal and petty-bourgeois) element. Those who juxtapose or compare state capitalism with Socialism only commit a host of mistakes, for in the present political and economic circumstances it is essential to compare state capitalism also with petty-bourgeois production.

The whole problem—both theoretical and practical—is to find the correct methods of directing the inevitable (to a certain degree and for a certain time) development of capitalism into the channels of state capitalism; to determine what conditions to surround it with, how to ensure the transformation of state capitalism into Socialism in the not distant future.

In order to approach the solution of this problem we must first of all picture to ourselves as distinctly as possible what state capitalism will be and can be in practice within our Soviet system, within the framework of our Soviet state.

The simplest case, or example, of how the Soviet government directs the development of capitalism into the channels of state capitalism, of how it “implants” state capitalism, is concessions. We all now agree that concessions are necessary; but not all of us ponder over what concessions mean. What are concessions under the Soviet system, from the point of view of social-economic systems and their interrelations? They are an agreement, a *bloc*, an alliance between the Soviet, *i.e.*, proletarian state and state capitalism against the small-proprietor (patriarchal and petty-bourgeois) element. The concessionaire is a capitalist. He conducts his business on capitalist lines, for profit; he is willing to enter into an agreement with the proletarian government in order to obtain extra profits, over and above ordinary profits, or in order to obtain raw materials which he cannot otherwise obtain, or can obtain with great difficulty. The Soviet government gains by the development of the productive forces, by securing an increase in the quantity of goods immediately, or within a very short period. We have, say, a hundred such-and-such hunting and fishing territories, mines, and forest territories. We cannot develop all of these—we lack the machines, food and transport. That is also why we badly develop the other territories. Because of the bad and inadequate development of large enterprises, the small-proprietor element increases in all its manifestations: the deterioration of outlying (and later of the whole of) peasant farming, the weakening of its productive forces, decline in confidence in the Soviet government, thieving and mass petty (the most dangerous) profiteering, etc. By “im-

planting" state capitalism in the form of concessions, the Soviet government strengthens large-scale production as against small production, advanced production as against backward production, machine production as against hand production; and it obtains a larger quantity of the manufactures of large-scale industry (percentage deduction),¹ and strengthens state-regulated economic relations as against petty-bourgeois anarchical relations. The moderate and cautious application of the concessions policy will undoubtedly help us quickly (to a certain, not very large, degree) to improve the state of industry and the conditions of the workers and peasants—of course, at the cost of certain sacrifices, the surrender to the capitalist of tens and tens of millions of poods of valuable products. The measure and the conditions that will make concessions advantageous and not dangerous to us are determined by the relation of forces, they are decided by struggle; for concessions are also a form of struggle, they are the continuation of the class struggle in another form, and under no circumstances are they the substitution of class peace for class war. Practice will determine the methods of struggle.

Compared with other forms of state capitalism within the Soviet system, state capitalism in the form of concessions is, perhaps, the simplest, most distinct, clearest and most precise. Here we have a formal written agreement with the most cultured, advanced, West European capitalism. We know exactly our gains and our losses, our rights and obligations; we know exactly the periods for which we grant the concessions; we know the terms of redemption before the expiration of the agreement, if the agreement provides for such redemption. We pay a certain "tribute" to world capitalism, we "ransom" ourselves from it by such-and-such arrangements and obtain immediately a definite increase in stability in the position of the Soviet government, an improvement in the conditions of our economy. The whole difficulty in regard to concessions lies in thinking out and weighing up all the circumstances when concluding a concession agreement, and then in being able to

¹ According to the terms of the concession, the concessionaire was obliged to deliver a certain percentage of his output to the Soviet government.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

supervise its fulfilment. Undoubtedly there are difficulties, and in all probability mistakes will be inevitable at first; but these difficulties are very minor ones compared with the other problems of the social revolution, to mention particularly the other forms of developing, permitting and implanting state capitalism.

The most important task that confronts all Party and Soviet workers in connection with the introduction of the food tax is to be able to apply the principles, the fundamentals, of the "concessions" policy (*i.e.*, a policy similar to "concessions" state capitalism) to the other forms of capitalism: free trade, local turnover, etc.

Take the co-operatives. It is not surprising that the food tax decree immediately gave rise to a revision of the regulations governing the co-operatives and to a certain extension of their "liberties" and rights.¹ The co-operatives are also a form of state capitalism, but less simple; its outline is less distinct. It is more confused and therefore creates greater practical difficulties for our government. The small commodity producers' co-operative societies (and it is the latter, and not the workers' co-operatives that we are discussing as the predominant and typical form in a *small-peasant* country) inevitably give rise to petty-bourgeois capitalist relations, facilitate their development, push small capitalists into the foreground and benefit them most. It cannot be otherwise since the small proprietors predominate and exchange is possible and necessary. Under the conditions prevailing in Russia at present, freedom and rights for the co-operative societies mean freedom and rights for capitalism. It would be stupid and criminal to close our eyes to this obvious truth.

But, unlike private capitalism, "co-operative" capitalism under the Soviet government is a variety of state capitalism, and as such it is advantageous and useful for us at the present time—in a certain measure, of course. Since the food tax means the free sale of surplus grain (over and above that taken in the form of the tax), we must exert every effort to direct *this* development of capitalism—for free sale, free trade *is* the development of

¹ Cf. "The Tax in Kind," in this volume, pp. 113-14 -Ed.

capitalism—into the channels of co-operative capitalism. Co-operative capitalism is like state capitalism in that it facilitates accounting, control, supervision and the establishment of contractual relations between the state (in this case the Soviet state) and the capitalist. Co-operative trade is much more advantageous and useful than private trade not only for the above-mentioned reasons, but also because it facilitates the amalgamation, the organisation, of millions of the population, and later the whole of the population; and this in its turn is an enormous gain from the point of view of the subsequent transition from state capitalism to Socialism.

Let us compare concessions with co-operation as forms of state capitalism. Concessions are based on large-scale machine industry; the co-operatives are based on small, handicraft, and partly even on patriarchal industry. Each individual concession agreement affects one capitalist, or one firm, one syndicate, cartel or trust. The co-operative societies embrace many thousands and even millions of small proprietors. Concessions permit and even presuppose a definite agreement for a definite period. Co-operative societies permit of neither a definite agreement nor a definite period. It is much easier to repeal the law on the co-operatives than to annul a concession agreement; but the annulment of an agreement means simply and immediately breaking off the practical relations of an economic alliance, or economic "cohabitation," with the capitalist, whereas the repeal of the law on the co-operatives, or of any law for that matter, does not immediately break off the practical "cohabitation" between the Soviet government and the small capitalists, nor, in general, is it able to break off practical economic relations. It is easy to "watch" a concessionaire, it is difficult to watch co-operators. The transition from concessions to Socialism is the transition from one form of large-scale production to another form of large-scale production. The transition from small proprietor co-operatives to Socialism is the transition from small production to large-scale production, i.e., it is a more complicated transition, but, if successful, is capable of embracing wider masses of the population, is capable of uprooting the deeper and more tenacious

roots of the old, pre-Socialist and even pre-capitalist relations, which more stubbornly resist all "innovations." The concessions policy, if successful, will give us a few exemplary—compared with our own—large enterprises built on the level of modern advanced capitalism; after a few decades these enterprises will entirely revert to us. The co-operative policy, if successful, will result in raising small economy and in facilitating its transition, within an indefinite period, to large-scale production on the basis of voluntary amalgamation.

Take a third form of state capitalism. The state enlists the capitalist as a merchant and pays him a definite commission on the sale of state goods and on the purchase of the produce of the small producer. A fourth form: the state leases to the capitalist entrepreneur establishments, hunting and fishing territories, forest sections, land, etc., which belong to the state, the lease being very similar to a concession agreement. These two latter forms of state capitalism are not talked about, not thought about, not observed at all. This is not because we are strong and clever, but because we are weak and foolish. We are afraid of looking the "vulgar truth" straight in the face, and too often we yield to "flattering deception." In constantly repeating that "we" are passing from capitalism to Socialism, we forget to picture to ourselves precisely and distinctly who "we" are. We must constantly have in mind the whole list—absolutely without exception—of the constituent parts, of all the diverse systems of social economy in our economics that I enumerated in my article of May 5, 1918, in order that this clear picture may not be forgotten. "We," the vanguard, the advanced detachment of the proletariat, are passing directly to Socialism; but the advanced detachment is only a small part of the whole of the proletariat, while the latter, in its turn, is only a small part of the whole population. And in order that "we" may successfully solve the problem of our direct transition to Socialism we must understand what *auxiliary* paths, methods, means and instruments are required for the transition from *pre-capitalist* relations to Socialism. That is the whole point.

Look at the map of the R.S.F.S.R. To the North from Vologda,

to the Southeast from Rostov-on-Don and from Saratov, to the South from Orenburg and from Omsk, to the North from Tomsk, there are boundless spaces big enough to contain scores of large civilised states. And over all these spaces patriarchalism, semi-savagery and real savagery reign. And what about the more isolated peasant districts of the rest of Russia, wherever scores of versts of country track, or rather of trackless country, separate the villages from the railways, *i.e.*, from material connection with culture, with capitalism, with large-scale industry, with the big cities? Do not patriarchalism, *Oblomovism*¹ and semi-savagery also predominate in those places?

Is a direct transition from this condition predominating in Russia to Socialism conceivable? Yes, it is conceivable to a certain degree, but on one condition, the precise nature of which we know now thanks to an enormous piece of scientific work that has been completed—electrification. If we construct scores of district electric power stations (we know where and how these can and should be constructed), if we transmit electric power from these to every village, if we obtain a sufficient number of electric motors and other machinery, we shall not need, or shall hardly need, transitional stages, intermediary links between patriarchalism and Socialism. But we know perfectly well that at least ten years will be required to complete the first stage of this "one" condition; a reduction of this period is conceivable only if the proletarian revolution is victorious in such countries as England, Germany and America.

For the next few years we must learn to think of the intermediary links that can facilitate the transition from patriarchalism, from small production, to Socialism. "We" still constantly repeat the argument "Capitalism is evil, Socialism is good." But this argument is wrong, because it leaves out of account the sum total of the existing social-economic systems and singles out only two of them.

Capitalism is evil compared with Socialism. Capitalism is good

¹ Slothfulness and indolence—the characteristics of the hero in Goncharov's novel *Oblomov*.—Ed. Eng. ed.

compared with mediævalism, compared with small production, compared with bureaucracy, which is connected with the dispersed character of the small producers. Inasmuch as we are as yet unable to pass directly from small production to Socialism, capitalism is inevitable to a certain degree as the elemental product of small production and exchange, and we must utilise capitalism (and in particular, direct it into the channels of state capitalism) as the intermediary link between small production and Socialism, as a means, a path, a method of raising the productive forces.

Take the question of bureaucracy and glance at it from the economic aspect. On May 5, 1918, bureaucracy was not within our field of vision. Six months after the October Revolution, after we had smashed the old, bureaucratic apparatus from top to bottom, we did not yet feel this evil.

Another year passed. At the Eighth Congress of the R.C.P. (March 18-23, 1919), a new Party programme was adopted, and in this programme we straightforwardly—not fearing to recognise an evil, but desiring to reveal it, to expose it, to pillory it, to rouse the idea and will, energy and action to combat it—speak of “*a partial revival of bureaucracy in the Soviet system.*”

Another two years passed. In the spring of 1921, after the Eighth Congress of Soviets (December 1920), which discussed the question of bureaucracy, after the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P. (March 1921), which summed up the controversies that were closely connected with the analysis of bureaucracy, we see *this* evil confronting us more clearly, more distinctly and more menacingly. What are the economic roots of bureaucracy? There are two main roots: on the one hand, the developed bourgeoisie needs a bureaucratic apparatus, primarily a military apparatus, and then a juridical apparatus, etc., to be used precisely against the revolutionary movement of the workers (and partly of the peasants). This we have not got. Our courts are class courts directed against the bourgeoisie. Our army is a class army directed against the bourgeoisie. Bureaucracy does not exist in the army but in the institutions that serve it. Our bureaucracy has a different economic root; it is

the fragmented and dispersed character of small production, its poverty, lack of culture, absence of roads, illiteracy, absence of *exchange* between agriculture and industry, the absence of connection and interaction between them. To a large extent this is the result of the civil war. When we were blockaded, besieged on all sides, cut off from the whole world and from the grain-bearing South, from Siberia, from coal, we could not restore industry. We had unhesitatingly to introduce "War Communism," to dare to go to the most desperate extremes: to suffer an existence of semi-starvation and worse than semi-starvation, but to hold on at all costs, in spite of unprecedented ruin and the absence of intercourse, in order to save the workers' and peasants' government. We did not allow ourselves to be frightened by what frightened the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks (who in fact, to a large extent, followed the bourgeoisie out of fear, because they were frightened). But what was a condition of victory in a blockaded country, in a besieged fortress, revealed its negative side precisely in the spring of 1921, when the last of the White Guard forces were finally driven from the territory of the R.S.F.S.R. In a besieged fortress, all trade can and should be "locked in"; with the masses displaying extraordinary heroism this could be borne for three years. After that, the ruin of the small producer still further increased, the restoration of large-scale industry was still further delayed, postponed. Bureaucracy, as a heritage of the "siege," as the superstructure of fragmented and crushed small production, fully revealed itself.

We must be able to recognise evil fearlessly in order to combat it the more firmly, in order, again and again, to start from the beginning—we shall many times and in all spheres have to start our construction all over again from the beginning, to remedy what was left undone and select various methods of approach to the problem. The postponement of the restoration of large-scale industry, the unbearableness of "locked in" exchange between industry and agriculture were revealed; and that meant that all efforts had to be concentrated on what was more accessible—the restoration of small industry: helping things from that side, propping up that side of the structure that was half demolished by the war and

blockade; doing everything possible to develop trade at all costs without being afraid of capitalism, because the limits we have put to it (the expropriation of the landlords and of the bourgeoisie in economics, the workers' and peasants' government in politics) are sufficiently narrow, sufficiently "moderate." This is the fundamental idea of the food tax; this is its economic significance.

All workers, Party and Soviet, must concentrate all their efforts, all their attention, on creating, on rousing great local initiative in economic construction—in the gubernias, still more in the uyezds, still more in the volosts and villages—precisely from the point of view of raising peasant farming immediately, even if by "small" means, on a small scale, helping it to develop small local industry. The single national economic plan demands that precisely this should become the focus of attention and care, the focus of "urgency." The achievement of a certain amount of improvement here, closest to the broadest and deepest "foundation," will permit of the speediest transition to the more energetic and more successful restoration of large-scale industry.

Hitherto the food worker has known only one fundamental instruction—Collect the quotas 100 per cent. Now he has another instruction—Collect the tax 100 per cent in the shortest possible time and then collect another 100 per cent in exchange for the manufactures of large-scale *and* small industry. Those who collect 75 per cent of the tax and 75 per cent of the second hundred in exchange for the manufactures of large-scale and small industry will do more useful work of national importance than those who collect 100 per cent of the tax and 55 per cent of the second hundred by means of exchange. The task of the food worker now becomes more complicated. On the one hand, it becomes a fiscal task—Collect the tax as quickly and as rationally as possible. On the other hand, it is a general economic task—Try to direct the co-operatives, assist small industry, develop local initiative in such a way as to increase the exchange between agriculture and industry and make it durable. We still do this very badly; bureaucracy is the proof of this. We must not be afraid to admit that here *we can and must learn a great deal from the capitalist*. We shall compare the prac-

tical experience of the various gubernias, uyezds, volosts and villages: in one place private capitalists and little capitalists have achieved so much; their profits are approximately so much. This is tribute, the fee we pay "for tuition." We shall not mind paying for this tuition if only we learn something. But in the neighbouring locality so much and so much has been achieved by co-operative methods. The profits of the co-operatives are so much. And in a third place, by purely state, by purely Communist methods, so much and so much has been achieved (in the present period this third case will be a rare exception).

The task should be for every oblast economic centre, for every gubernia economic conference of the Executive Committee, to organise immediately, as a matter of urgency, various experiments, or systems of "exchange" with the surplus stocks that remain after the food tax has been paid. In a few months' time practical results must be obtained for comparison and study. Local or imported salt; kerosene from the centre; the handicraft wood-working industry; handicrafts using local raw materials and producing certain, not very important, perhaps, but nevertheless useful, articles for the peasants; "white coal" (the utilisation of small local water power resources for electrification), and so on and so forth—all this must be set going in order to stimulate exchange between industry and agriculture at all costs. Those who achieve the best results in this sphere, even by means of private capitalism, even without the co-operatives, without directly transforming this capitalism into state capitalism, will do more for the cause of all-Russian Socialist construction than those who will "ponder over" the purity of Communism, draw up regulations, rules and instructions for state capitalism and the co-operatives, but who will do nothing practical to stimulate trade.

Private capital in the role of accomplice of Socialism—does that not seem paradoxical?

It is not paradoxical in the least; and economically it is an irrefutable fact. Since we are dealing with a small-peasant country in which transport is in an extreme state of dislocation, a country which has just emerged from war and blockade, which is political-

ly guided by the proletariat—which holds transport and large-scale industry in its hands—it inevitably follows, firstly, that local exchange acquires first-class significance at the present moment, and, secondly, that the possibility exists of assisting Socialism by means of private capitalism (not to speak of state capitalism).

Less argument about words! We still have too much of this sort of thing. More variety in practical experience and more study of this experience! Under certain conditions the exemplary organisation of local work, even on a small scale, is of far greater national importance than many branches of central state work. And these are precisely the conditions we are in at the present moment in regard to peasant farming in general, and in regard to the exchange of the surplus products of agriculture for the manufactures of industry in particular. Exemplary organisation in this respect, even in a single volost, is of far greater national importance than the “exemplary” improvement of the central apparatus of any People’s Commissariat; for our central apparatus has been built up during the past three and a half years to such an extent that it has managed to acquire a certain amount of harmful inertness; we cannot improve it quickly to any extent, we do not know how to do it. Assistance in the more radical improvement of it, a new flow of fresh forces, assistance in the successful struggle against bureaucracy, in the struggle to overcome this harmful inertness, must come from the localities, from the lower ranks, with the exemplary organisation of a small “whole,” precisely a “whole,” *i.e.*, not one farm, not one branch of economy, not one enterprise, but the *sum total* of economic relations, the *sum total* of economic exchange, even if only in a small locality.

Those of us who are doomed to remain on work at the centre will continue the task of improving the apparatus and purging it of bureaucracy, even if in modest and immediately achievable dimensions. But the greatest assistance in this task is coming, and will come, from the localities. Generally speaking, as far as I can observe, things are better in the localities than at the centre; and this is understandable, for naturally, the evil of bureaucracy concentrates at the centre. In this respect Moscow cannot but be the

worst city, and in general the worst "place," in the republic. In the localities we have a deviation from the middle line in both directions, the deviation to the bad side being less frequent than the deviation to the good side. The deviation to the bad side is shown by the abuses committed by former government officials, landlords, bourgeois and other scum who have attached themselves to the Communists and whose conduct towards the peasantry is sometimes disgraceful and outrageous. Here there must be a terroristic purging; summary trial and death by shooting. Let the Martovs, the Chernovs, and the non-party philistines like them, beat their breasts and exclaim: "I thank Thee, Lord, that I am not as one of 'these'; that I have never recognised, nor do I recognise, terror." These fools "do not recognise terror" because they chose for themselves the role of servile accomplices of the White Guards in fooling the workers and peasants. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks "do not recognise terror" because under the flag of "Socialism" they are fulfilling their function of *leading the masses into the reign of White Guard terror*. This was proved by the Kerensky and Kornilov regime in Russia, by the Kolchak regime in Siberia, by Menshevism in Georgia; it was proved by the heroes of the Second International and of the "Two-and-a-Half" International in Finland, Hungary, Austria, Germany, Italy, England, etc. Let the flunkey accomplices of White Guard terror praise themselves for repudiating all terror. We shall speak the bitter and undoubted truth: in countries that are experiencing an unprecedented crisis, the collapse of old ties, and the intensification of the class struggle after the imperialist war of 1914-18—and such are all the countries of the world—terror cannot be dispensed with notwithstanding the hypocrites and phrasemongers. Either the White Guard, bourgeois terror of the American, British (Ireland), Italian (the fascists), German, Hungarian and other types, or Red proletarian terror. There is no middle course, no "third" course, nor can there be.

A deviation towards the good side is shown by the successful struggle against bureaucracy, by the solicitude shown for the needs of the workers and peasants, the great care devoted to raising economy, raising the productivity of labour and developing local

exchange between agriculture and industry. Although this deviation towards the good side is more frequent than the deviation towards the bad side, it is nevertheless rare. Still, it is there. The training of new, young, fresh Communist forces hardened by civil war and privation is proceeding everywhere in the localities. All of us are still doing very far from enough systematically and unswervingly to promote these forces from the bottom to the top. This can and must be done more persistently and on a wider scale. Some workers can and should be transferred from work at the centre to work in the localities: as leaders of *uyezds* and *volosts*, by organising *all* economic work as a *whole* in an *exemplary* manner, they will do far more good and perform work of far greater *national* importance than if they performed any central function; for the exemplary organisation of work will serve as a "nursery" for workers and as an example to be copied—and it will be relatively easy to copy it—and we at the centre will be able to help this "copying" to become widely adopted and obligatory everywhere.

By its very nature the work of developing "exchange" between agriculture and industry with the grain surpluses left over after the payment of the food tax and with the manufactures of small, mainly handicraft industry calls for independent, well-informed and wise *local initiative*; and that is why the exemplary organisation of *uyezd* and *volost* work now acquires absolutely exceptional importance from the national point of view. In military affairs, during the last Polish war for example, we did not fear to depart from the bureaucratic hierarchy, we were not afraid of "reducing in rank," transferring members of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic to lower posts (while they retained the higher central post). Why not now transfer several members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, or members of collegiums, or other highly placed comrades, to *uyezd* or even *volost* work? Surely we have not become so "bureaucratized" as to "be ashamed" to do that. Surely we shall find scores of central workers in our midst who would willingly agree to this. The economic building up of the whole republic will gain by this enormously; and the exemplary *volosts*, or exemplary *uyezds*, will play not only a great, but a positively decisive, historic role.

By the way. As a small but nevertheless significant circumstance note should be taken of the necessary change in the presentation of the principle of the question of combating profiteering. We must foster "proper" trade, trade that does not evade state control; it is to our advantage to develop this sort of trade. But profiteering, taken in its political and economic sense, *cannot* be distinguished from "proper" trade. Free trade is capitalism; capitalism is profiteering. It would be ridiculous to close our eyes to this.

What should we do? Declare profiteering to be unpunishable?

No. We must revise and redraft all the laws on profiteering, and declare all *thieving* and every direct or indirect, open or concealed *evasion of state control, supervision and accounting* to be a punishable offence (and in fact prosecute it with trebled severity). It is precisely by presenting the question in this way (the Council of People's Commissars has already started, that is to say, the Council of People's Commissars has ordered that work be started on the revision of the anti-profiteering laws) that we shall succeed in directing the inevitable, and to a certain extent necessary, development of capitalism into the channels of *state* capitalism.

POLITICAL SUMMARY AND DEDUCTIONS

I still have to touch, if briefly, upon the political situation, on the way it arose and underwent modification in connection with the economics I have outlined above.

I have already said that the fundamental features of our economics in 1921 are the same as those existing in 1918. In the spring of 1921, mainly as a result of the failure of the harvest and the dying of cattle, the condition of the peasantry, which was extremely bad already as a consequence of the war and blockade, became very much worse. This resulted in political vacillation which, generally speaking, expresses the very "nature" of the small producer. The most striking expression of this vacillation was the Kronstadt mutiny.

The most characteristic feature of the Kronstadt events was precisely the vacillation of the petty-bourgeois element. There was

very little of anything that was fully formed, clear and definite. We heard nebulous slogans about "liberty," "free trade," "emancipation from serfdom," "Soviets without the Bolsheviks," or new elections to the Soviets, or relief from "Party dictatorship," and so on and so forth. Both the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries declared the Kronstadt movement to be "their own." Victor Chernov sent a runner to Kronstadt: on the proposal of this runner the Menshevik Valk, one of the Kronstadt leaders, voted for the "*Constituent*."¹ In a flash, with radio-telegraphic speed, one might say, the White Guards mobilised all their forces "*for Kronstadt*." The White Guard military experts in Kronstadt, a number of experts, and not Kozlovsky alone, drew up a plan for a landing of forces at Oranienbaum, a plan which frightened the vacillating Menshevik-Socialist-Revolutionary non-party masses. More than fifty Russian White Guard newspapers published abroad are conducting a furious campaign "*for Kronstadt*." The big banks, all the forces of finance capital, are collecting funds to assist Kronstadt. The wise leader of the bourgeoisie and the landlords, the Cadet Milyukov, is patiently explaining to the fool Victor Chernov directly (and to Dan and Rozhkov, who are in Petrograd jail for their connection with the Kronstadt Mensheviks, indirectly) that they need be in no hurry with their Constituent, and that they *can and must support the Soviets—only without the Bolsheviks*.

Of course, it is easy to be cleverer than conceited fools like Chernov, the hero of petty-bourgeois phrases, or like Martov, the knight of philistine reformism painted to look like "Marxism." Properly speaking, the point is not that Milyukov, as an individual, is cleverer, but that because of his class position the party leader of the big bourgeoisie sees, understands the class essence and political interaction of things more clearly than the leaders of the petty bourgeoisie, the Chernovs and Martovs. The bourgeoisie is really a class force which inevitably rules under capitalism, both under a monarchy and in the most democratic republic, and which also inevitably enjoys the support of the world bourgeoisie. But the petty bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, all the heroes of the Second International and of the "Two-and-a-Half" International, cannot, by the

¹ A derisive term for the Constituent Assembly.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

very economic nature of the case, be anything else than the expression of class impotence; hence the vacillation, phrases and helplessness. In 1789 the petty bourgeois could still be great revolutionaries; in 1848 they were ridiculous and pitiful; the real role they are playing in 1917-21 is that of repulsive accomplices of reaction, the cringing servitors of reaction, no matter whether their names are Chernov and Martov, or Kautsky, MacDonald, and so on and so forth.

When in his Berlin journal Martov declared that Kronstadt not only adopted Menshevik slogans but also proved that an anti-Bolshevik movement was possible which did not entirely serve the interests of the White Guards, the capitalists and the landlords, he served as an example of a conceited philistine Narcissus. He said in effect: "Let us close our eyes to the fact that all the real White Guards greeted the Kronstadt mutineers and through the banks collected funds in aid of Kronstadt!" Milyukov is right compared with the Chernovs and Martovs, for he proposes *real* tactics for a *real* White Guard force, the force of the capitalists and landlords. He says in effect: "It does not matter whom we support, even the anarchists, any sort of Soviet government, *as long as the Bolsheviks are overthrown, as long as a shifting of power can be brought about!* It makes no difference, to the Right or to the Left, to the Mensheviks or to the anarchists, as long as power shifts away from the Bolsheviks." As for the rest—"we," the Milyukovs, "we," the capitalists and landlords, will do the rest "ourselves"; we shall give the anarchists, the Chernovs and the Martovs a good slapping and kick them out as was done to Chernov and Maisky in Siberia, to the Hungarian Chernovs and Martovs in Hungary, to Kautsky in Germany and Friedrich Adler and Co. in Vienna. The real, practical bourgeoisie fooled hundreds of these philistine Narcissuses: the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and non-party people, and kicked them out scores of times in all revolutions in all countries. This is proved by history. It is corroborated by facts. The Narcissuses will chatter; the Milyukovs and White Guards will act.

Milyukov is absolutely right when he says: If only power shifts away from the Bolsheviks, a little to the Right or a little to the

Left does not matter, all the rest will come of itself. This is class truth, confirmed by the whole history of revolutions in all countries, by the whole of the age-long epoch of modern history since the Middle Ages. The scattered small producers, the peasants, are economically and politically united either by the bourgeoisie (this has always been the case under capitalism in all countries, in all revolutions of modern times, and so it will always be under capitalism), or by the proletariat (that was the case in a rudimentary form for short periods at the peak of some of the greatest revolutions in modern history; that has been the case in Russia in a more developed form in 1917-21). Only conceited Narcissuses can chatter and dream about a "third" path, about a "third" force.

With enormous difficulty, and in the midst of desperate struggles, the Bolsheviks trained a proletarian vanguard capable of governing; and they created and successfully defended the dictatorship of the proletariat. After the test of experience, after four years of practical experience, the relation of class forces in Russia has become as clear as clear can be: the steeled and hardened vanguard of the only revolutionary class; the petty-bourgeois vacillating element; the Milyukovs, the capitalists and landlords, hiding abroad and supported by the world bourgeoisie. The thing is as clear as clear can be. These and these alone can benefit by any "shifting of power."

In the above-quoted pamphlet of 1918 it was definitely stated concerning this: "The principal enemy" is the "petty-bourgeois element." "Either we subordinate it to our control and accounting or it will overthrow our workers' government as surely and as inevitably as the revolution was overthrown by the Napoleons and Cavaignacs who sprang from this very soil of small ownership. This is how the question stands. It can stand in no other way." (Extract from the pamphlet of May 5, 1918, *cf.* above.¹)

Our strength lies in complete clarity and the sober calculation of *all* the existing class magnitudes, Russian and international; and it lies in the iron energy, firmness, determination and devotion in struggle that arise from this. We have many enemies, but they are

¹ See "Left-Wing" Childishness and Petty-Bourgeois Mentality," *Selected Works*, Vol. VII.—*Ed.*

disunited, or else they do not know what they want (like all the petty bourgeoisie, all the Martovs and Chernovs, all the non-party people, all the anarchists). But we are united—directly among ourselves and indirectly with the proletarians of all countries; we know what we want. That is why we are invincible on a world scale, although we do not in the least preclude the possibility of the defeat of individual proletarian revolutions for a given period of time.

It is not for nothing that the petty-bourgeois element is called an element, for it is indeed something that is most amorphous, indefinite and unconscious. The petty-bourgeois Narcissuses think that "universal suffrage" abolishes the nature of the small producer under capitalism; as a matter of fact it *helps* the bourgeoisie with the aid of the church, the press, the teachers, the police, the militarists and a thousand and one forms of economic oppression; helps it to *subordinate* the scattered small producers to itself. Ruin, want and hard conditions of life give rise to vacillation: for the bourgeoisie today, for the proletariat tomorrow. The hardened proletarian vanguard alone is capable of withstanding and overcoming vacillation.

The events of the spring of 1921 once again revealed the role of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks: they are helping the vacillating petty-bourgeois element to recoil from the Bolsheviks, to cause a "shifting of power" for the benefit of the capitalists and landlords. *The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries have now learnt to disguise themselves as "non-party."* This has been proved to the hilt. Only fools can now fail to see this, fail to understand that we must not allow ourselves to be fooled. Non-party conferences are not a fetish. They are valuable if they help us to come closer to the as yet untouched masses, to the strata of toiling millions outside of politics; they are harmful if they provide a platform for the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries disguised as "non-party." These people are helping mutinies, are helping the White Guards. The place for Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, open or disguised as non-party, is in prison (or on foreign journals side by side with the White Guards; we quite willingly allowed Martov to go abroad), but not at a

non-party conference. We can and must find other methods of testing the moods of the masses, of coming closer to them. Let those who want to play at parliamentarism, at Constituents, at non-party conferences, go abroad, let them go to Martov, we will let them go; let them try the charms of "democracy"; let them ask Wrangel's soldiers about these charms. We have no time to play at "oppositions" at "conferences." We are surrounded by the world bourgeoisie, who are watching every moment of vacillation in order to bring back "their own folk," to restore the landlords and the bourgeoisie. We will keep the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, whether open or disguised as "non-party," in prison.

We shall by every possible means establish closer contacts with the masses of the toilers who are untouched by politics, but we shall not use the methods which give scope for the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, *give scope for vacillation that benefits Milyukov*. In particular, we shall zealously promote to Soviet work, primarily promote to economic work, hundreds and hundreds of non-party people, real non-party people from the masses, from the rank and file of the workers and peasants, and not those who have "disguised themselves" as non-party in order to read off from a "crib" Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary instructions which are so much to Milyukov's advantage. Hundreds and thousands of non-party people are working for us, and of these, scores occupy most important and responsible posts. More testing of their work. More promotion for a new testing of thousands and thousands of rank-and-file toilers, trying them systematically and unrelaxingly, promoting hundreds to higher posts on the basis of these tests of experience.

Our Communists still do not sufficiently understand their real duties of administration: they should not strive to do "everything themselves," wearing themselves out and failing to do much, starting on twenty jobs and finishing none; they should test the work of scores and hundreds of assistants, arrange for the testing of their work from below, *i.e.*, by the real masses; they should *direct* the work and *learn* from those who have knowledge (the experts) and experience in organising large-scale production (the capitalists).

A wise Communist will not be afraid of learning from a military expert, although nine-tenths of the military experts are capable of treachery at every opportunity. A wise Communist will not be afraid of learning from a capitalist (no matter whether that capitalist is a big capitalist concessionaire, or a commission agent, or a little capitalist co-operator, etc.), although the capitalist is no better than the military expert. Did we not in the Red Army learn to catch treacherous military experts, to single out the honest and conscientious, and, on the whole, to utilise thousands and tens of thousands of military experts? We are learning to do the same (in a peculiar way) with engineers and teachers, although we are doing it much worse than we did it in the Red Army (there Denikin and Kolchak whipped us up, compelled us to learn more quickly, more diligently and more intelligently). We shall learn to do the same (again in a peculiar way) with the commission agents, with the buyers who are working for the state, with the little co-operator-capitalists, with the entrepreneur concessionaires, etc.

The masses of the workers and peasants need an immediate improvement in their conditions. By putting new forces, including non-party forces, to useful work, we shall achieve this. The food tax, and a number of measures connected with it, will facilitate this. By this we shall cut the economic root of the inevitable vacillations of the small producer. As for political vacillations which only benefit Milyukov, we shall fight them ruthlessly. The waverers are many, we are few. The waverers are disunited, we are united. The waverers are not economically independent, the proletariat is economically independent. The waverers do not know what they want: they want to, and would like to, but Milyukov won't let them. We know what we want.

And that is why we shall win.

CONCLUSION

To sum up.

The food tax is the transition from War Communism to the proper Socialist interchange of products.

The extreme ruin rendered more acute by the failure of the harvest in 1920 made this transition urgently necessary owing to

the fact that it was impossible to restore large-scale industry rapidly.

Hence the first thing to do is to improve the conditions of the peasants. The means to this are the food tax, the development of exchange between agriculture and industry, the development of small industry.

Exchange is free trade, it is capitalism. It is useful to us inasmuch as it will help us to overcome the scatteredness of the small producer, and to a certain degree to combat bureaucracy; to what extent will be determined by practical experience. The proletarian power need not fear this as long as the proletariat firmly holds power in its hands, as long as it firmly holds transport and large-scale industry in its hands.

The fight against profiteering must be transformed into a fight against larceny and against the evasion of state supervision, accounting and control. By means of this control we shall direct capitalism, which is inevitable and to a certain extent necessary for us, into the channels of state capitalism.

All-sided development of local initiative and independent action in encouraging exchange between agriculture and industry—this must be done to the utmost extent and at all costs. The study of practical experience in this. The greatest possible variety in this.

Assistance for small industry which serves peasant agriculture and helps it to raise itself; assistance for it also, to a certain extent, by distributing to it raw materials from state stocks. The most criminal thing would be to leave these raw materials unused.

We must not be afraid of Communists "learning" from bourgeois specialists, including the merchants, the capitalist co-operators and the capitalists; of learning from them in the same way in substance as we learnt from the military experts, though in a different form. The results of what is "learnt" must be tested only by practical experience: do things better than the bourgeois specialists at your side; learn to achieve, this way and that way, the raising of agriculture, the raising of industry, the development of exchange between agriculture and industry. Do not stint payment for "tuition": no price for tuition will be too high if only we learn intelligently.

Do everything to help the toiling masses, to come closer to them, to promote from their ranks hundreds and thousands of non-party workers for the work of economic administration. And those "non-party" people who are nothing more nor less than Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries disguised in fashionable, Kronstadt, non-party attire should be carefully kept in prison, or packed off to Berlin, to Martov, so that they may freely enjoy all the charms of pure democracy and freely exchange ideas with Chernov, Milyukov and the Georgian Mensheviks.

April 21, 1921

TO THE COMMUNISTS OF AZERBAIJAN, GEORGIA,
ARMENIA, DAGHESTAN AND THE
GORSKY REPUBLIC

COMRADES, in warmly greeting the Soviet Republics of the Caucasus, I permit myself to express the hope that their close alliance will serve as a model of national peace unprecedented under the bourgeoisie and impossible under the bourgeois system.

But however important national peace among the workers and peasants of the Caucasian nationalities may be, the maintenance and development of the Soviet power as the transition to Socialism are incomparably more important. The task is a difficult one, but quite possible of fulfilment. The most important thing for the successful fulfilment of this task is that the Transcaucasian Communists shall understand *the peculiar feature of their position, of the position of their republics, as distinct from the position and conditions of the R.S.F.S.R.; that they shall understand the necessity of not copying our tactics, but of thoughtfully varying them in accordance with the difference in the concrete conditions.*

The Soviet Republic in Russia obtained no political or military assistance from anywhere. On the contrary, for years and years it fought against the military invasions of the Entente and against its blockade.

The Soviet Republics of the Caucasus obtained political and, to a small extent, military assistance from the R.S.F.S.R. This is a fundamental difference.

Second: now there is no need to fear military invasion from the Entente and its military assistance to the Georgian, Azerbaijan, Armenian, Daghestan and Gorsky White Guards. The Entente "burnt its fingers" on Russia, and that will probably compel it to be more cautious for some time.

Third: the Caucasian republics are even more in the nature of peasant countries than Russia.

Fourth: economically, Russia has been, and to a considerable degree still is, cut off from the advanced capitalist countries; *the Caucasus can arrange "cohabitation" and commercial intercourse with the capitalist West more quickly and easily.*

These are not all the differences; but the differences enumerated are sufficient to enable one to understand the necessity of adopting different tactics.

More mildness, caution, and willingness to yield to the petty bourgeoisie, to the intelligentsia, and particularly to the peasantry. Make the utmost, intense and speedy economic use of the capitalist West by means of a policy of concessions and commercial intercourse. Oil, manganese, coal (Tkvarcheli mines), copper—such is the far from complete list of enormous mineral wealth. There is every possibility of widely developing a policy of concessions and commercial intercourse with foreign countries.

This must be done on a wide scale, firmly, wisely and circumspectly, and it must be utilised in every possible way for the purpose of improving the conditions of the workers and peasants, and for the purpose of enlisting the intelligentsia for the work of economic construction. Utilising commercial intercourse with Italy, America and other countries, exert every effort to develop the productive forces of your rich region, "white coal" and irrigation. *Irrigation is particularly important as a means of raising agriculture and livestock farming at all costs.*

A slower, more cautious, more systematic transition to Socialism—this is what is possible and necessary for the republics of the Caucasus as distinct from the R.S.F.S.R. This is what must be understood, and what you must be able to carry out as distinct from our tactics.

We have made the first breach in world capitalism. A breach has been made. We have maintained our positions after a fierce, superhuman, severe, difficult and painfully intense war against the Whites, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, who were supported by the whole of the Entente, by its blockade and by its military assistance.

You, comrades, Communists of the Caucasus, have no need to make a breach; taking advantage of the favourable international situation that exists for you in 1921, you must learn to create new conditions with greater caution, and more systematically. Neither Europe nor the whole world is what it was in 1917 and 1918.

Do not copy our tactics, but think out for yourselves the reasons why they assumed these peculiar features, the conditions that gave rise to them, and their results; apply in your republics, not the letter, but the spirit, the sense, the lessons of the experience of 1917-21. Economically, base yourselves at once on commercial intercourse with the capitalist countries; do not begrudge the cost; let them have scores of millions' worth of valuable minerals.

Try immediately to improve the conditions of the peasants and start on extensive work of electrification and irrigation. Irrigation is most of all necessary and will most of all re-create the region, regenerate it, will bury the past and reinforce the transition to Socialism.

Excuse the slipshod style of this letter; I had to dash it off in haste in order to despatch it with Comrade Myasnikov. Once again I send my best greetings and wishes to the workers and peasants of the Soviet Republics of the Caucasus.

N. LENIN

Moscow, April 14, 1921

REPORT ON THE FOOD TAX

Delivered at the All-Russian Conference of the R.C.P.(B.)

May 26, 1921

COMRADES, I had occasion to discuss the question of the food tax for the benefit of the Party in a pamphlet¹ with which, I suppose, the majority of you are familiar. The fact that this question was to be brought up for discussion at this conference came as a surprise to me, for I had not seen any material indicating that it was necessary to raise it. But many of the comrades who have visited the districts, and particularly Comrade Ossinsky, after he returned from his tour of a number of gubernias, informed the Central Committee—and this was corroborated by several other comrades—that in the districts the policy which took shape in connection with the food tax is still unclear to a very large extent, and partly even not understood. In view of the exceptional importance of this policy, a supplementary discussion at the Party conference seemed so necessary that it was decided to convene the conference before the date originally fixed for it. It falls to my lot to introduce the question of the general significance of this policy, and I should like to confine myself to slightly supplementing what I have already said in the pamphlet. I am not directly informed about the precise manner in which this question is presented in the districts, about what flaws, defects and unclarity are most of all felt there. Probably I shall have to give additional details later on, when it becomes clearer from the questions that are raised at the conference, or from the subsequent debate, in which direction the attention of the local workers and of the Party should be turned.

As far as I can see, the misunderstandings and insufficiently

¹ *The Food Tax*, in this volume.—Ed.

clear understanding of the political tasks connected with the food tax and the New Economic Policy are perhaps due to the exaggeration of this or that aspect of the matter. But until we have put the matter in a practical way, these exaggerations are absolutely inevitable; and until we have carried out at least one food campaign on the new principles it will hardly be possible to define at all precisely the real limits of application of this or that specific feature of this policy. I will only deal in general outline with several contradictions which, as I can judge from several notes that were sent up at the meeting, have given rise to most misunderstanding. Often the food tax and the change in our policy connected with it are interpreted as meaning a fundamental change of policy. It is not surprising that this interpretation is taken up and made most of by the White Guards, particularly by the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik press abroad. I do not know whether it was due to the operation of similar influences which have made themselves felt on the territory of the R.S.F.S.R., or whether it is due to the acute discontent which was observed in certain circles, and perhaps is still observed owing to the food situation having become very much worse, but to a certain extent this sort of perplexity has spread even here and has created what, to a considerable degree, is a wrong conception of the significance of the change that has been brought about and of the character of the new policy.

Naturally, under conditions in which the peasant population preponderates enormously, the principal task—of our policy in general, and of our economic policy in particular—is to establish definite relations between the working class and the peasantry. For the first time in modern history we have to deal with a social system from which the exploiting class has been eliminated, but in which we have two different classes—the working class and the peasantry. The enormous preponderance of the peasantry could not but affect our economic policy, and our policy in general. The principal problem that still confronts us—and will inevitably confront us for many years to come—is that of establishing proper relations between these two classes, proper from the point of view of abolishing classes. The enemies of the Soviet government very often discuss the formula of the agreement between the working class and the

peasantry, and very often they use it against us, because, taken by itself, this formula is absolutely indefinite. Agreement between the working class and the peasantry may be taken to mean anything. If we do not bear in mind that, from the point of view of the working class, an agreement can be permissible, correct and possible in principle only if it supports the dictatorship of the working class and is one of the measures intended for the purpose of abolishing classes, the formula of agreement between the working class and the peasantry of course remains a formula which all the enemies of the Soviet government, all the enemies of the dictatorship, can utilise in expressing their views. How is this agreement to be carried out in the first period of our revolution, i.e., the period which we can now consider as having approximately come to an end? How did the dictatorship of the proletariat retain power and consolidate itself amidst the enormous preponderance of the peasant population? The principal reason, the principal motive force and the principal determinant of our agreement was the civil war. Although, very often, the civil war started with the White Guards, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks participating in the alliance against us, it always inevitably led to the Socialist-Revolutionary, Constituent Assembly and Menshevik elements finding themselves—either as a result of a political *coup d'état* or without it—forced into the background and to the capitalist and landlord elements exclusively coming out at the head of the White Guards. This was the case under the Kolchak and Denikin governments, and under all the numerous smaller governments and invasions that were organised against us. This was the principal factor that determined the form of the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry. This circumstance created thrice incredible difficulties for us; but on the other hand it relieved us of the necessity of difficult reflections about the manner in which the formula of the alliance between the working class and the peasantry had to be realised; for the formula and the conditions were prescribed by the circumstances of war in an absolutely categorical fashion, which left us absolutely no choice.

The working class is the only class that could achieve the dictatorship in the form demanded by the war and the conditions of

the civil war. The fact that the landlords fought in the civil war united the working class and the peasantry unconditionally, unreservedly and irrevocably. In this respect there were no internal political waverings whatever. Amidst the gigantic difficulties that confronted us because Russia was cut off from her principal grain districts and because the food difficulties had reached the utmost extreme, our food policy could not have been carried out in practice without the food quotas. These food quotas meant not only taking the surplus stocks of grain, which would hardly have sufficed even if they had been properly distributed. I cannot here deal in detail with the irregularities which the food quotas brought in their train. At all events, the food quotas fulfilled their main function—to preserve industry even amidst conditions in which we were cut off most completely from the grain districts. And only amidst the conditions of war could this have been at all satisfactory. As soon as we had really and durably finished with the external enemy—and this only became a fact in 1921—another task confronted us—the task of establishing an *economic* alliance between the working class and the peasantry. We were only able to take up this task definitely in the spring of 1921, and that was at a time when the failure of the harvest in 1920 had worsened the conditions of the peasantry to an incredible degree, when we for the first time to a certain degree experienced internal political waverings, connected, not with the outside pressure of enemies, but with the relations between the working class and the peasantry. Had we had a very good harvest, or at least a good harvest, in 1920, had we collected 400,000,000 poods of grain out of a total quota of 420,000,000 poods, we would have been able to fulfil the greater part of our industrial programme and would have had a fund with which to exchange the manufactures of urban industry for the produce of agriculture. . . . But the opposite happened. In some places we had a fuel crisis that was even more acute than the food crisis; it was utterly impossible to satisfy the needs of peasant farming in urban manufactures. An incredibly acute crisis of peasant farming set in. These are the circumstances that gave rise to the situation in which we could not under any circumstances continue with the old food policy. We had to bring up the question of what economic basis

we immediately required for the alliance between the working class and the peasantry as stepping stones to further measures.

The measure that can serve as a stepping stone to further measures is to prepare for the exchange of the manufactures of industry for the produce of agriculture, to create a system under which the peasant will not have to surrender his produce in any way except in exchange for the manufactures of urban and factory industry, and which at the same time should not subordinate him to any of the forms existing under the capitalist system. In view of economic conditions, however, we could not even think about that. That is why we have adopted the transitional form I have spoken about, namely, to take produce in the form of a tax without giving any equivalent, and to obtain additional produce through the medium of exchange. For this a fund is necessary; but our fund is extremely small and the possibilities of augmenting it by means of commercial intercourse with foreign countries are arising only this year as a result of a number of agreements with capitalist countries. It is true that as yet they are only an introduction, a preface; real commercial intercourse has not yet begun. The sabotage and all sorts of attempts to disrupt these agreements by the majority or the larger section of the capitalist circles are continuing uninterruptedly, and the most characteristic thing is that the Russian White Guard press, including the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik press, concentrates its efforts more energetically and persistently on these agreements than on any other question. It is absolutely clear that the bourgeoisie is better prepared for struggle, that it is more developed than the proletariat, that its class consciousness has become still more keen as a consequence of the "unpleasantnesses" it has had to put up with, and that it is betraying a sensitiveness that is ever so much greater than the normal. It is sufficient to peruse the White Guard press to see that it is hitting at precisely the point which is the centre, the nodal point, of our policy.

After the failure of military intervention, which has obviously collapsed, although the struggle is still going on, the whole of the White Guard Russian press set itself an impossible aim: to disrupt the trade agreements. The campaign which was begun this spring on an extremely extensive scale, and in which the Socialist-

Revolutionaries and Mensheviks occupied first place among the counter-revolutionary forces, was waged for a definite object—to disrupt the economic agreements between Russia and the capitalist world this spring; and to a considerable extent they succeeded in achieving their aim. It is true that we have concluded the principal agreements, the number of which is growing, and that we are overcoming the intense resistance to them; but a very dangerous delay has set in; for without a certain amount of assistance from abroad, the restoration of large-scale industry and the restoration of proper exchange of commodities is either impossible or will be delayed to such an extent as to become extremely dangerous. These are the conditions under which we are obliged to act, and these are the conditions which have brought the question of restoring trade for the peasants to the forefront. I shall not deal with the question of concessions, because this question has been debated most at Party meetings, and has not given rise to any perplexity lately. As hitherto, the position is that we are persistently offering concessions, but we have not yet received a single serious proposal from the foreign capitalists, and we have not yet concluded a single really important concession agreement. The whole difficulty lies in finding a practically tested method of enlisting West European capital.

Theoretically, it is absolutely indisputable—and it seems to me that everyone's doubts have been dispersed on this score—theoretically, I say, it is absolutely clear that it would be to our advantage to ransom ourselves from European capital with a few score or hundred millions, which we could afford to pay, in order in the shortest possible time to augment our supplies of equipment, materials, raw materials and machines for the purpose of restoring our large-scale industry.

The real and only basis upon which we could consolidate our resources for the creation of Socialist society is large-scale industry. Without large factories on the capitalist scale, without highly organised large-scale industry, there can be no thought of Socialism in general, and still less can there be any thought of it in a peasant country. We in Russia realise this far more concretely than before, and instead of an indefinite or abstract form of restoring large-scale industry, we now speak of a definite, precisely calcu-

lated, concrete plan of electrification. We have a plan calculated with absolute precision with the aid of the best Russian specialists and scientists, a plan which gives us a definite picture of the resources, bearing in mind the specific natural features of Russia, with which we can, must and will lay the basis of large-scale industry for our economy. Without it there can be no thought of a real Socialist foundation for our economic life. This remains absolutely indisputable, and if recently, in connection with the food tax, we have been speaking about this in abstract terms, now we must say concretely that we must first of all restore large-scale industry. . . .¹ I myself have heard statements of this kind from several comrades, and all I could do in reply, of course, was to shrug my shoulders. It is, of course, absolutely ridiculous and absurd to assume that we could ever forget about this fundamental aim. The only question that arises here is: how could such doubts and perplexity arise in the minds of comrades; how could they think that this main, fundamental aim, without which the material production basis of Socialism is impossible, has been relegated to second place? These comrades have simply misunderstood the relation between our state and small industry. Our main task is to restore large-scale industry; and in order to approach the task of restoring large-scale industry at all seriously and systematically we must restore small industry. Both this year, 1921, and last year, we had long interruptions in our work of restoring large-scale industry.

In the autumn and winter of 1920 we started several important branches of our large-scale industry, but we had to suspend them again. Why? Many factories were able to obtain sufficient supplies of labour and sufficient supplies of raw materials; why then should work at these factories have been suspended? Because we lacked a sufficient fund of food and fuel. Without a state fund of 400,000,000 poods of grain (I give an approximate figure) divided into regular monthly instalments, it is difficult to talk about any sort of regular economic construction, about restoring large-scale industry. Without it we find that after having started work on restoring large-scale industry and continuing it for several months we

¹ Omission in the stenographic report.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

have to suspend it again. The great majority of the small number of factories that were started are now idle. Without a fully assured and adequate food fund there can be no talk of the state concentrating its attention on systematically organising the restoration of large-scale industry, organising it on a modest scale, perhaps, but in such a way as to keep it going continuously.

And in regard to fuel, until the Donbas is restored, until we obtain a regular supply of oil, we shall continue to have to rely on timber, on wood fuel, which again means that we shall be dependent on this small-scale production.

That is why those comrades who failed to understand that attention at the present time must be mainly devoted to the peasant were mistaken, were in error. Some workers say: The peasants are given certain favours, but we are not given anything. We have heard statements of this kind, and we must say that, although I think they are not very widespread, such statements are dangerous, because they repeat what the Socialist-Revolutionaries say; they are an obvious political provocation, and also a survival of the craft, not class, but craft union prejudices of the workers who think that the working class is a part of capitalist society having equal rights with the other part, and who fail to realise that they are still standing on the old capitalist basis; they say, in fact: The peasant is given favours, he has been relieved of the food quotas, he is allowed to retain his grain surplus for the purpose of exchange; we workers, we work at the machines, we want to have the same. . . .

What is at the bottom of this point of view? In essence, the old petty-bourgeois ideology. Since the peasant is a constituent part of capitalist society, the working class also remains a constituent part of this society. Hence, if the peasant trades, we too should trade. Here we undoubtedly see the revival of the old prejudices which chain the workers to the old world. The most ardent champions, in fact the only sincere champions, of the old capitalist world are the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. In the other camps you will not find one in a hundred, not one in a thousand, nor even one in a hundred thousand who is a sincere champion of the capitalist world: but in the midst of so-called pure democracy, which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Menshe-

viks represent, rare specimens of sincere champions of capitalism have still remained. And the more persistently they advocate their point of view the more dangerous is their influence over the working class. They are still more dangerous in periods when the working class has to suffer suspension of production. The principal material basis for the development of proletarian class consciousness is large-scale industry, where the worker sees the factories working, where every day he senses the power which can really abolish classes.

When this material production basis slips from under the feet of the workers, they lose their balance; a feeling of indefiniteness, despair and disbelief sets in among certain strata of the workers, and, in combination with the direct provocation of our bourgeois democracy, *i.e.*, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, these have a definite effect. And here a mentality arises when people are to be found even in the ranks of the Communist Party who argue in this way: The peasants are given sops; on the same grounds, and by the same methods, sops should be given to the workers. We had to pay a certain amount of tribute to this mentality. The decree permitting the workers to receive bonuses in the shape of a part of the goods they produce is, of course, a concession to these sentiments, which have their roots in the past, which are connected with the state of disbelief and despair. Within small limits, this concession was necessary. It has been made. But we must not forget for a moment that we have been making a concession that is necessary from no other point of view except the economic point of view, from the point of view of the interests of the proletariat. The fundamental and material interest of the proletariat is the restoration of large-scale industry and the creation of a durable foundation for it. When that is done, it will consolidate its dictatorship, it will carry its dictatorship to the end for certain, in spite of all political and military difficulties. Why were we obliged to make a concession, and why would it be extremely dangerous to give it a wider interpretation than it deserves? Precisely because we were obliged to take this path by temporary food and fuel difficulties. When we say, "We must establish our relations with the peasants, not on the food quota basis, but on a tax basis," what is the prin-

cial economic determinant of this policy? The fact that under the food quotas the small peasant farms lacked a proper economic base and were doomed to remain moribund for many years; for small farming could not exist and develop, because the small proprietor was not interested in consolidating and developing his activities and in increasing the output of produce; and as a consequence, we found ourselves without an economic basis. We have no other basis, we have no other source, and unless the state is able to concentrate large stocks of food in its hands there can be no thought of restoring large-scale industry. That is why we are first of all pursuing this policy which is changing our food relations.

We are pursuing this policy in order that we may have our fund for the restoration of large-scale industry, in order to save the working class from all suspensions of work—which our large-scale industry, miserable as it is compared with that of the advanced countries, should not experience—in order to save the proletariat in its quest for resources from the necessity of resorting to methods which are not proletarian, but profiteering, petty-bourgeois methods, and which represent the greatest economic danger for us. Owing to the deplorable conditions in which we now find ourselves, the proletarians are obliged to resort to methods of obtaining a livelihood that are not proletarian, are not connected with large-scale industry, but are petty-bourgeois, profiteering methods; they are obliged, either by stealing, or by making them for themselves in the public factory, to sell articles in exchange for agricultural produce—and this is our main economic danger, the main danger that threatens the existence of the Soviet system. The proletariat must now exercise its dictatorship in such a way as to feel firmly entrenched as a class, so as to feel the ground firmly under its feet. But this ground is slipping from under its feet. Instead of continuously working large-scale industry, the proletariat sees something else and is compelled to enter the economic sphere as a profiteer, or as a small producer.

In order to get rid of this we must stint no sacrifice in this transitional period. In order to ensure the continuous, if slow, restoration of large-scale industry we must not hesitate to throw sops to the foreign capitalists who are greedily expecting these sops;

because, from the point of view of building up Socialism, it is at present to our advantage to pay hundreds of millions extra to the foreign capitalists in order to obtain the machines and materials for the restoration of large-scale industry which will restore the economic basis of the proletariat, will transform it into a steadfast proletariat and not a proletariat that remains a class of profiteers. The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries have deafened us with their loud declarations that, as the proletariat has been declassed, we ought to abandon proletarian tasks. They have been shouting this since 1917, and one can only express surprise that they have not grown tired of shouting this up to 1921. When we hear this sort of talk we do not say that there has been no declassing, that there are no defects; we say that the conditions of Russian and international reality are such that even if the proletariat has to go through a period of declassing, has to suffer these defects, it can fulfil its task of capturing and holding political power in spite of them.

It would be ridiculous, foolish and absurd to deny that the declassing of the proletariat is a defect. By 1921 we realised that after the struggle against the external enemies had come to an end, the main danger, the greatest evil that confronted us was that we could not ensure the continuous operation of the few large enterprises that remained. This is the main thing. Without such an economic basis the working class cannot have firm political power. In order to ensure the continuous restoration of large-scale industry we must organise food affairs in such a way as to ensure the collection and proper distribution of a fund of, say, 400,000,000 poods. It would be utterly impossible for us to collect this fund by means of the old quotas; 1920 and 1921 have proved this. Now we see that we can fulfil this extremely difficult task by means of the food tax. We could not have fulfilled this task by the old methods, and we had to seek for new methods. We can fulfil this task by means of the food tax and by establishing proper relations with the peasant as a small producer. Up to now we have devoted no little attention to the task of proving this theoretically.

I think, judging by the Party press and by what is said at meetings, that it has been fully proved theoretically that this task

can be fulfilled if the proletariat retains possession of the transport system, of the big factories, of the economic bases as well as of political power. We must give the peasant a fair amount of elbow room as a small producer. Unless we raise peasant farming we shall not solve the food problem.

These are the limits within which we must present the question of developing small industry on the basis of free trade, free turnover. This free turnover is a means for creating the possibility of establishing such relations between the working class and the peasantry as will be economically stable. The statistics on agricultural output that we are now receiving are becoming more and more precise. At the Party congress a pamphlet on grain output was distributed, it was distributed to the delegates at the congress when it was still in proofs. Since then this material has been compiled and distributed. Although the pamphlet in its final form has been sent to press, it is not yet ready for the conference and I am unable to say whether it will be ready before the conference comes to a close and the delegates disperse. We shall do all we can to get it out in time, but we cannot promise to do so.

This is a small piece of work that we have performed in order to determine the position in regard to agricultural output, the resources at our disposal, as precisely as possible.

Still, we can say that statistics are available which prove that we can completely solve this economic problem, particularly this year, when the prospects of the harvest are not at all bad, or not as bad as we anticipated in the spring; this ensures us the possibility of collecting a fund of agricultural produce that will enable us to devote ourselves entirely to the task of slowly, perhaps, but steadily restoring our large-scale industry.

In order to solve the problem of collecting a food fund we must devise a form of relations with the small proprietor, and there is no other form except that of the food tax; nobody has proposed any other form, and no other form can be imagined. But we must solve this problem in a practical manner, we must arrange to have the tax collected properly and not do as we did before, when we took grain from the peasant twice and three times and left him in worse conditions than before, so that the more diligent peasant suffered

more than the others, and all possibility of establishing economically stable relations was destroyed. Although the food tax is also a measure for imposing a levy on every peasant, it must be collected differently. On the basis of the collected and published data we can say that the food tax will now bring about an enormous, decisive change in this matter; but whether we shall succeed in including everything is still, to some extent, an open question. Of one thing we can be quite certain, however, and that is that we must bring about an immediate improvement in the conditions of the peasant.

The task that confronts the local workers is to collect the food tax in full, and to collect it in the shortest possible time. The difficulties are increased by the fact that the harvest promises to be an unusually early one this year, and if in our preparations we base ourselves on customary dates, we stand the risk of being late. That is why the early convocation of the Party conference was important and opportune. We must set to work to prepare the apparatus for collecting the food tax much more quickly than we have done before. The accumulation of the minimum state fund of 240,000,000 poods of grain and the possibility of making the position of the peasant secure depend on the speed with which we collect the food tax. Delay in collecting the tax will cause a certain amount of hardship to the peasant. The tax will not be paid voluntarily, we shall not be able to dispense with coercion, the collection of the tax will cause a number of hardships for peasant farming; if we drag out the process of collecting the tax longer than is necessary the peasant will be discontented and will say that he has not obtained the freedom to dispose of his surplus. In order that freedom shall resemble freedom in practice, the tax must be collected quickly, the tax-collector must not hover over the peasant for long, and the period between the gathering of the harvest and the collection of the tax in full must be reduced to the minimum.

This is one task. Another task is to enable the peasant to enjoy freedom to trade to the utmost limits and to raise small production; to give a certain amount of freedom to the capitalism that grows up on the basis of small production and petty trade. We must not be afraid of it, for it is not in the least dangerous to us.

In view of the general economic and political situation that

has now arisen, when the proletariat owns all the sources of large-scale production, when denationalisation in any shape or form is totally out of the question, we need not fear it at all. At a time when we are suffering most of all from a complete lack of products, from our utter impoverishment, the fear that capitalism based on small-industry agriculture is a menace to us is ridiculous. To fear it means totally failing to take into account the relation of forces in our economy, it means totally failing to understand that peasant economy, which is small-peasant economy, cannot be in the least stable without a certain amount of free turnover and without the capitalist relations that are connected with it.

This is what you must firmly impress on your minds, comrades; and our main task is to give an impetus to all the localities, to give the utmost scope for initiative, to display the utmost independence and the utmost boldness. What we have suffered from in this respect up to now has been that we have been afraid of things being done on anything like a wide scale. We have no more or less concretely tabulated local data showing from practical experience what the situation is in regard to local goods exchange and goods turnover, what success has been achieved in restoring and developing small industry—which is able to alleviate the conditions of the peasant immediately without the great effort of transporting large stocks of food and fuel to the industrial centres that large-scale industry requires. In this respect not enough from the general economic point of view is being done locally. We have no data from the localities, we do not know what the position is all over the republic, we have no examples of really well organised work; and my impression is that the same applies to the trade union congress and to the congress of the Supreme Council of National Economy.

Here again, the principal defect of these congresses is that we devote ourselves mainly to such threadbare things as theses, general programmes and arguments, and do not arrange them so that the people attending them can really share local experiences and, on returning home, be able to say: "Out of a thousand examples we heard one good one, and we shall follow it." We have not only one good example out of a thousand, we have many more; but

least of all do we see congress work arranged in this way.

I do not want to run ahead; still, I must say a word or two about the collective maintenance of the workers, *i.e.*, about the transition from the ration system to a system under which a certain quantity of provisions is assured to a certain enterprise, which is really working, in proportion to its output. The idea is an excellent one, but we have transformed it into something semi-fantastic. No real preparatory work for this has been done yet. We have no example as yet of a particular factory, even one employing a small number of workers, in a particular uyezd, having tried this system and having secured such-and-such results. We have no example of this yet. This is one of the greatest defects in our work. We must unceasingly repeat that instead of discussing general problems, which was all very well in 1918, *i.e.*, in the long distant past, in 1921 we must discuss practical problems. By relating at congresses first of all where we have examples of well-organised work—we could quote enough examples of this kind—we make it an obligation for the rest to strive to follow the example of the best that has been achieved in the rare and exceptional localities. I have in mind the work of the trade union congress, but it applies also to all work connected with the food problem.

Quite a lot has been done in certain localities, in a few localities, to prepare for the collection of the food tax, for the organisation of goods exchange, etc., but we have not learnt to study this experience; and the great task that confronts us now is to induce the vast majority of the localities to follow the example of the best. We must take up the work of studying practical experience and of raising the backward and medium uyezds and volosts, the standard of which is absolutely unsatisfactory, to the level of the insignificant number of highly satisfactory ones. At our congresses we must devote ourselves to the utmost, not to the study of general theses and programmes of meetings, but to the study of practical experience, to the study of the satisfactory and highly satisfactory localities, and to raising the backward and medium localities, which predominate, to the level of these good localities, which are rare, but nevertheless exist.

These are the remarks to which I must confine myself.

SPEECH IN REPLY TO THE DEBATE ON THE REPORT ON
THE FOOD TAX AT THE ALL-RUSSIAN CONFERENCE
OF THE R.C.P.(B.), MAY 27, 1921 ¹

COMRADES, notwithstanding the dissatisfaction with the report and the debate expressed by many local comrades, it seems to me that we have achieved one object—we have ascertained how the new policy is understood and applied locally. The conference could hardly have set itself any other aim except that of securing an interchange of opinion for the purpose of thoroughly assimilating this new policy and of unanimously proceeding to apply it properly. This we have achieved. True, we heard expressions of perplexity and even of wavering of mind, which, unfortunately, at times far exceeded the limits of practical perplexity and guessing about whether the new policy was meant “seriously” or “not seriously,” for a “long time” or not. What Comrade Vareikis said, for example, was really not Communistic; the content of the ideas he expressed put one in mind of Menshevism. I must say this quite bluntly. How could he persist in putting the question, “Say, is the peasantry a class or not a class?” Of course it is a class. In that case, he says, we must make political concessions to it, or, if not concessions, then certain measures in that direction, which will resemble Zubatovism.

Reference was made here to the fact that Martov went the whole hog, whereas Vareikis says, “To a certain extent,” “to some degree,” “partly.” But this is incredible, monstrous confusion. It is the same sort of confusion as was displayed when we were accused of employing violence. Again we have to explain that when we speak about dictatorship we mean employing violence. Every state is the employment of violence; but the whole difference lies in whether this violence is employed against the exploited or against the ex-

¹ Only the first few pages of the report of this speech are given here.—*Ed.*

plotters, whether it is employed against the toiling and exploited class. The same applies to the reference to Zubatovism. What was Zubatovism? It was support for the oppressing class by means of small economic concessions to the oppressed classes. That is why the reply at that time was: You will not by means of economic concessions induce the proletariat, the class that is fighting for the emancipation of all the oppressed, to abandon the idea of capturing political power and of destroying the system of oppression. At the present time the proletariat holds political power and guides the state. It is leading the peasantry. What does leading the peasantry mean? It means, first, pursuing a course towards the abolition of classes, and not towards the small producer. If we wandered away from this radical and main course we would cease to be Socialists and would find ourselves in the camp of the petty bourgeoisie, in the camp of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who are now the most bitter enemies of the proletariat. Not long ago Comrade Bukharin quoted in *Pravda* some utterances of such a serious political thinker as Milyukov (Chernov and Martov come nowhere near him), who argued that the only party that could occupy the arena of political struggle in Russia today was a Socialist Party; and in so far as the "Socialist" Parties, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, desired to take up the burden of the struggle against the Bolsheviks, "honour and place" were due to them. This is literally what Milyukov said, and it proves that he is cleverer than Martov and Chernov simply for the reason that he is the representative of the big bourgeoisie (even if personally he were not as clever as Chernov and Martov). And Milyukov was right. He very soberly takes into account the degree of political development and says that stepping stones in the shape of Socialist-Revolutionism and Menshevism are necessary for the reversion to capitalism. The bourgeoisie needs such stepping stones, and whoever does not understand this is stupid.

From the point of view of the interests of the bourgeoisie Milyukov is absolutely right. Since we, as the party of the proletariat, are leading the peasantry, we must pursue a course towards the strengthening of large-scale industry, and therefore we must be prepared to make economic concessions. The proletariat led

the peasantry and led it in such a way that during the civil war the peasantry obtained more economic benefits than the proletariat. If we speak in the language of Martov this will be Zubatovism. Economic concessions have been made to the peasantry. These concessions were made to that section of the toilers which constitutes the majority of the population of the country. Is this a wrong policy? No, it is the only correct policy! And no matter what you say about Martov's catchwords, about your not deceiving a class, I, nevertheless, ask you: How are we deceiving a class? We say that there are two paths to choose from: the path of Martov and Chernov—and that leads to Milyukov—or the path of the Communists. As for ourselves, we are fighting for the abolition of capitalism and for the establishment of Communism; our road is a very hard one, and many who are weary and lack faith fall by the wayside. The peasants lack faith. But do we deceive them? It is ridiculous to say that we are deceiving a class, and that we have lost our way amidst three pines, and not even three, but two, for the working class and the peasantry are only two classes. The proletariat leads the peasantry; this class cannot be driven out as the landlords and capitalists were driven out and destroyed. By prolonged and persistent effort, entailing great privation, we must transform this class. . . . What amount of suffering will fall to the lot of the proletariat and what amount to the lot of the peasantry depends on us, on the leading Party. How is this suffering to be shared, equally, on the equalitarian principle? Let Chernov and Martov say that; we say that we must be guided by the interests of the proletariat, *i.e.*, we must secure safeguards against the restoration of capitalism, we must safeguard the road to Communism. Since the peasantry is now more weary, more exhausted, or rather it thinks that it is more weary, we make more concessions to it in order to secure safeguards against the restoration of capitalism and to safeguard the road to Communism. That is the correct policy, and we are guided exclusively by class considerations. We openly, honestly and without any subterfuge say to the peasants: In order to hold the road to Socialism we are making a number of concessions to you, comrades peasants, but only within such-and-such limits and to such-and-such an extent; and, of course, we ourselves

shall judge to what limits and to what extent. The concession itself is made from the point of view of distributing the burdens which up to now the proletariat has borne to a larger extent than the peasantry. During the three and a half years of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the proletariat has voluntarily borne more suffering than the peasantry. This is the absolutely obvious and incontrovertible truth. That is how the question stands in regard to the relations between the proletariat and the peasantry: either the peasantry comes to an agreement with us and we make economic concessions to it—or we fight. That is why every other argument is but evidence of horrible confusion. As a matter of fact, every other road is the road to Milyukov, to the restoration of the landlords and capitalists; we say we shall agree to make any concession within the limits of what will sustain and strengthen the power of the proletariat, which, notwithstanding all difficulties and obstacles, is unswervingly marching towards the abolition of classes and towards Communism.

THE TACTICS OF THE R.C.P.(B.)

*Report Delivered at the Third Congress of the Communist
International, July 5, 1921*

COMRADES, strictly speaking I was not able to prepare properly for the present report. All that I was able to prepare systematically was a translation of my pamphlet on the food tax ¹ and the theses on the tactics of the Russian Communist Party. To this material I want to add only a few explanations and remarks.

It seems to me that in explaining the tactics of our Party we must first of all deal with the international situation. We have already discussed in detail the economic position of capitalism internationally, and the congress has already adopted definite resolutions on this subject. I deal with this subject in my theses very briefly, and exclusively from the political point of view. I do not deal with the economic basis, but I think that in discussing the international position of our republic we must politically take into account the fact that a certain equilibrium has now undoubtedly set in between the forces which have waged an open, armed struggle against each other for the supremacy of this or that leading class—an equilibrium between bourgeois society, the international bourgeoisie as a whole, and Soviet Russia. Of course, it is an equilibrium only in a limited sense. It is only in respect to this military struggle, I say, that a certain equilibrium has been brought about in the international situation. It must be emphasised, of course, that this is only a relative equilibrium, a very unstable equilibrium. Much inflammable material has accumulated in capitalist countries, as well as in those countries which up to now have been regarded merely as the objects and not as the subjects of history, *i.e.*, the colonies and semi-colonies. It is quite possible, therefore, that insurrections, great

¹ In this volume, p. 164, *et seq.*—Ed.

battles and revolutions may break out in those countries sooner or later, and very unexpectedly. During the past few years we have witnessed the direct struggle waged by the international bourgeoisie against the first proletarian republic. This struggle has been in the forefront of the whole world political situation, and it is precisely here that a change has taken place. Inasmuch as the attempt of the international bourgeoisie to strangle our republic has failed, an equilibrium has set in, a very unstable one, of course.

We know perfectly well, of course, that the international bourgeoisie is now much stronger than our republic, and that it is only the peculiar combination of circumstances that is preventing it from continuing the war against us. For several weeks already we have witnessed fresh attempts in the Far East to renew the invasion, and there is not the slightest doubt that similar attempts will continue to be made. Our Party has no doubts whatever on this score. The important thing for us is to establish that an unstable equilibrium exists, and that we must take advantage of this respite, taking into consideration the characteristic features of the present situation, adapting our tactics to the specific features of this situation, and not forgetting for a moment that the necessity for an armed struggle may suddenly arise again. As hitherto, the organisation of the Red Army, its reinforcement, remains our task. Even in connection with the food problem we must continue to think first of all of our Red Army. In the present international situation, when we must all be prepared for fresh attacks and fresh attempts at invasion on the part of the international bourgeoisie, we cannot adopt any other line. In regard to our practical policy, however, the fact that a certain equilibrium has been brought about in the international situation has a certain amount of significance, but only in so far as we must admit that, although the revolutionary movement has made progress, the development of the international revolution this year has not proceeded along as straight a line as we expected.

When we started the international revolution, we did so not because we were convinced that we could forecast its development, but because a number of circumstances compelled us to start it. We thought: Either the international revolution comes to our assist-

ance, and in that case our victory will be fully assured, or we shall do our modest revolutionary work in the conviction that even in the event of defeat we shall have served the cause of the revolution and that our experience will benefit other revolutions. It was clear to us that without the support of the international world revolution the victory of the proletarian revolution was impossible. Before the revolution, and even after it, we thought: Either revolution breaks out in the other countries, in the capitalistically more developed countries, immediately, or at least very quickly, or we must perish. Notwithstanding this conviction, we did all we possibly could to preserve the Soviet system under all circumstances, come what may, because we knew that we were working not only for ourselves, but also for the international revolution. We knew this, we repeatedly expressed this conviction before the October Revolution, immediately after it, and at the time we signed the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty. And, speaking generally, this was correct.

In actual fact, however, events did not proceed along as straight a line as we expected. In the other big capitalistically more developed countries the revolution has not broken out to this day. True, we can say with satisfaction that the revolution is developing all over the world, and it is only thanks to this that the international bourgeoisie is unable to strangle us, in spite of the fact that, militarily and economically, it is a hundred times stronger than we are.

In point 2 of the theses I examine the manner in which this situation was created and the conclusions that must be drawn from it. I will add that the final conclusion that I draw from it is the following: the development of the international revolution, which we foretold, is proceeding, but not along as straight a line as we expected. It becomes clear from the very first glance that after the conclusion of peace, bad as it was, it proved impossible to call forth revolution in other capitalist countries, although we know that the signs of revolution were very considerable and numerous, much more considerable and numerous than we thought at the time. Pamphlets are now beginning to appear which tell us that during the past few years and months these revolutionary symptoms in Europe have been much more serious than we suspected.

What must we do now? Now we must make thorough preparation for revolution and deeply study its concrete development in the advanced capitalist countries. This is the first lesson we must draw from the international situation. For our Russian Republic, we must take advantage of this brief respite in order to adapt our tactics to this zig-zag line of history. This equilibrium is very important politically, because we clearly see that it is precisely in many West European countries, where the broad masses of the working class, and in all probability the overwhelming majority of the population, is organised, that the main bulwark of the bourgeoisie consists of the hostile working class organisations affiliated to the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. I speak of this in point 2 of the theses, and I think that in this connection I need deal with only two points, which were discussed during the debate on the question of tactics. First, the winning of the majority of the working class. The more organised the proletariat is in a capitalistically developed country, the greater thoroughness does history demand of us in preparing for revolution, and the more thoroughly must we win the majority of the working class. Second, the principal bulwark of capitalism in the industrially developed capitalist countries is precisely that part of the working class that is organised in the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. If it did not rely on this section of the workers, on these counter-revolutionary elements in the working class, the international bourgeoisie would be totally unable to retain its position.

Here I would also like to emphasise the significance of the movement in the colonies. In this respect we see in all the old parties, in all the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois labour parties affiliated to the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, survivals of the old sentimental views—profound sympathy for the oppressed colonial and semi-colonial peoples. The movement in colonial countries is still regarded as an insignificant national and quite peaceful movement. But this is not so. Great changes have taken place in it since the beginning of the twentieth century: millions and hundreds of millions, in fact the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe, are now coming forward as independent, active, revolutionary factors. It is perfectly clear that in the im-

pending decisive battles in the world revolution, the movement of the majority of the population of the globe, which at first is directed towards national liberation, will turn against capitalism and imperialism and will, perhaps, play a much more revolutionary part than we expect. It is important to emphasise the fact that for the first time in our International we have taken up the question of preparing for this struggle. Of course, there are many more difficulties in this enormous sphere than in any other, but at all events the movement is advancing, and in spite of the fact that the masses of the toilers, of the peasants, in the colonial countries are still backward, they will play a very important revolutionary part in the coming phases of the world revolution.

In regard to the internal political position of our republic I must start with a close examination of class relationships. During the past few months changes have taken place in this sphere, and we have witnessed the formation of new organisations of the exploiting class for the purpose of fighting us. The task of Socialism is to abolish classes. In the front ranks of the exploiting class we find the big landowners and the capitalist manufacturers. In regard to them, the work of destruction is fairly easy; it can be completed within a few months, and sometimes within a few weeks or days. We in Russia have expropriated our exploiters, the big landlords as well as the capitalists. They did not have their own organisations during the war and acted merely as the appendages of the military forces of the international bourgeoisie. Now, after we have repulsed the attacks of the international counter-revolution, organisations of the Russian bourgeoisie and of all the Russian counter-revolutionary parties have been formed abroad. The number of Russian émigrés who have scattered in all foreign countries may be calculated at one and a half to two millions. In nearly every country they publish daily newspapers, and all the parties, landlord and petty-bourgeois, not excluding the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, have numerous contacts with foreign bourgeois elements, that is to say, they obtain sufficient money to run their own press. We see the collaboration abroad of absolutely all the political parties that formerly existed in Russia, and we see how the "free" Russian press abroad, from the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to the

most reactionary monarchists, are championing large-scale land-ownership. This to a certain extent facilitates our task, because we can more easily observe the forces of the enemy, his state of organisation, and the political trends in his camp. On the other hand, of course, it hinders our work, because these Russian counter-revolutionary émigrés are resorting to all the means at their disposal to prepare for a fight against us. This fight again shows that, taken as a whole, the class instinct and class consciousness of the ruling classes is still superior to the class consciousness of the oppressed classes, notwithstanding the fact that the Russian revolution has done more than any previous revolution in this respect. In Russia there is hardly a village in which the people, the oppressed, have not been shaken up. Nevertheless, if we calmly appraise the state of organisation and political clarity of views of the Russian counter-revolutionary émigrés, we shall become convinced that the class consciousness of the bourgeoisie is still superior to that of the exploited and the oppressed. These people make every possible attempt, they skilfully take advantage of every opportunity, to attack Soviet Russia in one form or another and to dismember it. It would be very instructive—and I think the foreign comrades will do that—systematically to watch the most important strivings, the most important tactical moves, the most important trends of this Russian counter-revolution. It operates chiefly abroad, and it will not be very difficult for the foreign comrades to watch it. In some respects, we ought to learn from this enemy. These counter-revolutionary elements are very well informed, they are excellently organised and are good strategists, and I think that the systematic comparison, the systematic study of the manner in which they are organised and take advantage of every opportunity may have a powerful effect upon the working class from the point of view of propaganda. This is not general theory, it is practical politics; here we can see what the enemy has learnt. During the past few years the Russian bourgeoisie has suffered terrible defeat. There is an old proverb which says that a beaten army learns a great deal. The beaten reactionary army has learnt a great deal, has learnt thoroughly. It is learning with great avidity, and it is achieving really important successes. When we captured power in a single onrush, the Russian bourgeoisie was un-

organised, politically undeveloped. Now, I think, it stands on the level of modern, West European development. We must take this into account, we must improve our own organisation and methods, and we shall strive to achieve this with all our might. It was relatively easy for us, and I think that it will be equally easy for other revolutions, to cope with these two exploiting classes.

But, in addition to this class of exploiters, there is in nearly all other capitalist countries, with the exception, perhaps, of England, the class of small producers and small farmers. The principal problem of the revolution now is the struggle against these two classes. In order to rid ourselves of them we must adopt methods other than those employed against the big landlords and capitalists. We could simply expropriate and expel the two latter classes, and this is what we did. But we cannot act in this way towards the two last capitalist classes, the small producers and the petty bourgeoisie, which exist in all countries. In most capitalist countries these classes constitute a very considerable minority, approximately from thirty to forty-five per cent of the population. If to them we add the petty-bourgeois elements of the working class, we shall get even more than fifty per cent. These cannot be expropriated or expelled; other methods of struggle must be adopted in this case. From the international point of view, if we envisage the international revolution as a single process, the significance of the period into which we are now entering in Russia in essence is that we must now find a practical solution for the problem of the attitude the proletariat should adopt towards this last capitalist class in Russia. All Marxists have solved this problem properly and easily in theory. But theory and practice are two different things; solving a problem in theory is not the same thing as solving it in practice. We know definitely that we made serious mistakes. From the international point of view, the fact that we are now trying to determine the attitude the proletariat in power should adopt towards the last capitalist class, towards the deepest foundations of capitalism, the small proprietor, the small producer, is a sign of great progress. This problem now confronts us in a practical manner. I think we shall solve it. At all events, the efforts we are making to solve it will be useful for future proletarian revolu-

tions, and they will be able to make better technical preparations for solving the problem.

In my theses I tried to analyse the problem of the attitude the proletariat should adopt towards the peasantry. For the first time in history a state exists in which there are only two classes, the proletariat and the peasantry. The latter constitutes the overwhelming majority of the population. Of course, it is very backward. How does the attitude of the proletariat which holds political power towards the peasantry find practical expression in the development of the revolution? The first form is alliance, close alliance. This is a very difficult problem, but economically and politically it can be solved.

How did we approach this problem practically? We concluded an alliance with the peasantry. We interpret this alliance in the following way: the proletariat emancipates the peasantry from the exploitation of the bourgeoisie, from the latter's leadership and influence, and wins it over to its own side in order jointly to conquer the exploiters.

The Mensheviks argue in the following way: the peasantry constitutes a majority; we are pure democrats, therefore the majority should decide. But as the peasantry cannot be independent, this in practice means nothing more nor less than the restoration of capitalism. The slogan is the same: "Alliance with the peasantry." When we say that, we mean strengthening and fortifying the proletariat. We have tried to carry out this alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry, and the first stage was a military alliance. The three years of civil war created enormous difficulties, but in certain respects they facilitated our task. This may sound strange, but it is true. The war was not something new for the peasants; a war against the exploiters, against the big landlords, was quite intelligible to them. The overwhelming majority of the peasants were on our side. Notwithstanding the enormous distances, notwithstanding the fact that the overwhelming majority of our peasants are unable to read or write, they assimilated our propaganda very easily. This proves that the broad masses—and this applies also to the most advanced countries—learn much more easily from their own practical experience than from books. In Russia learning from practical

experience was facilitated for the peasantry by the fact that the country is so exceptionally large and that in the same period different parts of it experienced different stages of development.

In Siberia and in the Ukraine the counter-revolution was able to gain a temporary victory because there the bourgeoisie had the peasantry on its side, because the peasantry was opposed to us. Not infrequently the peasants said, "We are Bolsheviks, but not Communists. We are for the Bolsheviks because they expelled the landlords; but we are not for the Communists because they are opposed to individual farming." And for a time the counter-revolution was able to conquer in Siberia and in the Ukraine because the bourgeoisie achieved success in the struggle for influence over the peasantry. But only a very short period of time was required to open the peasants' eyes. In a very short period of time they accumulated practical experience and soon said, "Yes, the Bolsheviks are rather unpleasant people, we do not like them, but still, they are better than the White Guards and the Constituent Assembly." The word "Constituent" is a term of abuse among us, not only among the educated Communists, but also among the peasants. They know from practical experience that the Constituent Assembly and the White Guards are one and the same, that the latter inevitably come after the former. The Mensheviks also resort to a military alliance with the peasantry, but they fail to understand that a military alliance alone is inadequate. There can be no military alliance without an economic alliance. We do not live on air alone; our alliance with the peasantry could not possibly have lasted any length of time without the economic foundation, which was the basis of our victory in the war against our bourgeoisie. Did not our bourgeoisie unite with the whole of the international bourgeoisie?

The basis of our economic alliance with the peasantry was, of course, a simple, even a crude one. The peasant obtained from us all the land and assistance against big landlordism. In return for this, we were to obtain food. This alliance was something entirely new and did not rest on the basis of the ordinary relations between commodity producers and consumers. Our peasants understood this much better than the heroes of the Second and the Two-and-a-

Half Internationals. They said to themselves, "These Bolsheviki are stern leaders, but still, they are our people." Be that as it may, we in this way created the foundations of a new economic alliance. The peasants gave their produce to the Red Army and received from the latter assistance in protecting their possessions. This is always forgotten by the heroes of the Second International, who, like Otto Bauer, totally fail to understand the real situation. We confess that the original form of this alliance was very primitive and that we made very many mistakes. But we were obliged to act as quickly as possible, we had to organise supplies for the army at all costs. During the civil war we were cut off from all the grain districts of Russia. Our position was awful, and it was only by a miracle that the Russian people and the working class were able to bear such suffering, want, and privation, sustained by nothing more than a tireless striving for victory.

At all events, when the civil war came to an end a different problem faced us. If the country had not been ruined to such a degree as it had been after seven years of unceasing war, it would, perhaps, have been possible to find an easier transition to the new form of alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry. But bad as conditions in the country were, they were still further aggravated by the failure of the harvest, the shortage of fodder, etc. As a consequence, the sufferings of the peasants became unbearable. We had to show the broad masses of the peasants immediately that we were prepared to change our policy in a revolutionary manner, so that the peasants could say, "The Bolsheviki want immediately and at all costs to alleviate our intolerable conditions."

Thus the change in our economic policy came about; the tax in kind superseded requisitions. This was not devised at one stroke. You may find a number of proposals in the Bolshevik press over a period of months, but no plan that really promised success could be devised. But this is not important. The important thing is the fact that, yielding to exclusively practical considerations, and impelled by necessity, we changed our economic policy. The failure of the harvest, the shortage of fodder and the shortage of fuel—all these, of course, exercise a decisive influence on economy as a whole, including peasant economy. If the peasantry goes on strike,

we get no wood fuel; and if we get no wood fuel, the factories are compelled to shut down. Thus, in the spring of 1921, the economic crisis resulting from the terrible failure of the harvest and the shortage of fodder assumed gigantic proportions. All this was the result of the three years of civil war. We had to show the peasantry that we could and would quickly change our policy in order immediately to alleviate their want. We always say—and it was said at the Second Congress—that revolution demands sacrifices. Some comrades in their propaganda argue in the following way: We are prepared to make a revolution, but it must not be too severe. If I am not mistaken, this thesis was uttered by Comrade Shmeral in his speech at the congress of the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia. I read about it in the report published in the *Reichenberg Vorwärts*. Evidently there is a slight Left wing there; hence this source cannot be regarded as being quite impartial. At all events, I must say that if Shmeral did say that, he was wrong. Several comrades who spoke after Shmeral at this congress said, "Yes, we shall go with Shmeral because in this way we shall avoid civil war." If these reports are true, I must say that such agitation is not Communistic and not revolutionary. Naturally, every revolution involves enormous sacrifice on the part of the class which makes the revolution. Revolution differs from the ordinary struggle by the fact that ten and even a hundred times more people take part in it; hence every revolution involves sacrifices not only on the part of individual persons, but even on the part of a whole class. The dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia involves for the ruling class, for the proletariat, sacrifices, want and privation unprecedented in history, and in all probability the same will be the case in every other country.

The question arises: how shall we distribute the burden of this privation? We are the state power. To a certain extent, we are able to distribute the burden of privation, impose it upon several classes and in this way relatively alleviate the conditions of certain strata of the population. But on what principle must we act? On the principle of justice, or of the majority? No. We must act in a practical manner. We must distribute the burdens in such a way as to preserve the power of the proletariat. This is the only prin-

ciple by which we are guided. In the beginning of the revolution the working class was compelled to suffer incredible want. I now declare that from year to year our food policy is achieving increasing successes. Taken on the whole, the situation has undoubtedly improved. But the peasantry in Russia has certainly gained more from the revolution than the working class. There cannot be any doubt about that. From the standpoint of theory, this of course shows that, to a certain degree, our revolution was a bourgeois revolution. When Kautsky used this as an argument against us, we laughed. Naturally, it is only a bourgeois revolution—and not a Socialist revolution—which does not expropriate the big landed estates, expel the big landlords and divide the land. However, we were the only Party that managed to carry the bourgeois revolution to its logical conclusion and facilitate the struggle for the Socialist revolution. The Soviet government and the Soviet system are the institutions of our state. We have already established these institutions, but we have not yet solved the problem of the economic relations between the peasantry and the proletariat. Much still remains to be done, and the outcome of this struggle depends upon whether we solve this problem or not. Thus, the practical distribution of the burdens of privation is one of the most difficult problems. In general, the conditions of the peasants have improved, but dire suffering falls to the lot of the working class precisely because it is exercising its dictatorship.

I have already said that in the spring of 1921 terrible suffering and want caused by the fodder shortage and the failure of the harvest prevailed among the peasantry, which constitutes the majority of the population. Without good relations with the peasant masses we cannot possibly exist. Hence our task was to render them immediate assistance. The conditions of the working class are extremely hard. It is suffering terribly. The more developed political elements understand, however, that in the interest of the dictatorship of the working class we must make tremendous efforts to help the peasants at any price. The vanguard of the working class realised this, but there are still people in the ranks of this vanguard who cannot understand this, who are too weary to understand it. They regarded it as a mistake and began to use the word "opportunism."

They said, "The Bolsheviks are helping the peasants. The peasants who are exploiting us are getting everything, while the workers are starving. . . ." But is this opportunism? We are helping the peasants because without an alliance with them the political power of the proletariat is impossible, its preservation is inconceivable. It was precisely this consideration of expediency and not that of fair distribution that was decisive for us. We are assisting the peasants because it is absolutely necessary to do so in order that we may retain political power. The supreme principle of the dictatorship is the maintenance of the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry in order that the former may retain its leading role and its political power.

The only means we found for this was the adoption of the tax in kind, which was the inevitable consequence of the struggle. We shall introduce this tax for the first time this year. This principle has not yet been tried in practice. From the military alliance we must pass to the economic alliance, and theoretically the only basis for the latter is the introduction of the tax in kind. This is the only theoretically possible way of laying a really solid economic foundation for Socialist society. The socialised factory will give the peasant its manufactures and in return the peasant will give his grain. This is the only possible form of existence of Socialist society, the only form of Socialist construction in a country in which the small peasants constitute the overwhelming majority, or at all events a very considerable majority. The peasants will give one part of their produce in the form of the tax and the other part either in exchange for the manufactures of the Socialist factories or by means of the exchange of commodities.

This brings us to the most difficult problem. It goes without saying that the tax in kind means free trade. After having paid the tax in kind, the peasant will have the right freely to exchange the remainder of his grain. This freedom of exchange means freedom for capitalism. We say this openly and emphasise it. We do not conceal it in the least. Things would go very hard with us if we attempted to conceal it. Free trade means freedom for capitalism, but at the same time it means a new form of capitalism. It means that we are re-creating capitalism to a certain extent. We are

doing this quite openly. It is state capitalism. But state capitalism in a society in which power belongs to capital and state capitalism in a proletarian state are two different concepts. In a capitalist state, state capitalism is recognised by the state and is controlled by it for the benefit of the bourgeoisie, and in opposition to the interest of the proletariat. In the proletarian state, the same thing is done for the benefit of the working class for the purpose of withstanding the as yet strong bourgeoisie and of fighting it. It goes without saying that we must grant the foreign bourgeoisie, foreign capital, concessions. Without the slightest denationalisation, we shall grant mines, forests and oil wells to foreign capitalists, and receive in exchange manufactured goods, machinery, etc., and thus restore our own industry.

Of course, we did not all agree at once on the question of state capitalism. But we are very pleased to say that our peasantry is developing, that it has fully realised the historical significance of the struggle we are waging at the present time. Very simple peasants from the most remote districts have come to us and have said: "What! We have expelled our capitalists, the capitalists who speak Russian, and now foreign capitalists are coming!" Does not this show that our peasants are developing? There is no need to explain to a worker educated in economics why this is necessary. We have been so ruined by seven years of war that it will take many years to restore our industry. We must pay for our backwardness, for our weakness, and for the fact that we must now learn, and for what we are learning. Those who want to learn must pay for tuition. We must explain this to all and sundry, and if we prove it in practice the vast masses of the peasants and workers will agree with us, because in this way their conditions will be immediately improved, because it will ensure the possibility of restoring our industry. What compels us to do this? We are not alone in the world. We exist in a chain of capitalist states, we are a link in world economy. On one side there are colonial countries, but they cannot help us yet; on the other side there are capitalist countries, they are our enemies. The result is a certain equilibrium, a very bad one, it is true. Nevertheless, we must reckon with this fact. We must not shut our eyes to it if we want to exist. Either im-

mediate victory over the whole bourgeoisie, or the payment of tribute.

We quite openly admit, we do not conceal the fact, that concessions in the system of state capitalism mean paying tribute to capitalism. But we gain time, and gaining time means gaining everything, particularly in the epoch of equilibrium, when our foreign comrades are preparing thoroughly for their revolution. The more thorough their preparations, the more certain will be the victory. Meanwhile, however, we shall be compelled to pay tribute.

A few words about our food policy. Undoubtedly, it was a primitive and bad policy. But we can point to achievements. In this connection I must once again emphasise the fact that the only possible economic foundation of Socialism is large-scale machine industry. Whoever forgets this is no Communist. We must analyse this problem concretely. We cannot present problems in the way the theoreticians of old Socialism do. We must present them in a practical manner. What is modern large-scale industry? It is the electrification of the whole of Russia. Sweden, Germany and America have almost achieved this, although these countries are still bourgeois. A Swedish comrade told me that a large part of industry and thirty per cent of agriculture in Sweden are electrified. In Germany and America, which are even more developed capitalistically, we see the same thing on a larger scale. Large-scale machine industry is nothing more nor less than the electrification of the whole country. We have already appointed a special commission consisting of the best economists and technical forces. It is true that nearly all of them are hostile to the Soviet government. All these specialists will come to Communism, but not in the way we did, not by the road of twenty years of underground work, during which we unceasingly studied and repeated over and over again the A B C of Communism.

Nearly all the organs of the Soviet government were in favour of our going to the specialists. The specialist engineers will come to us when we prove to them in practice that this will raise the productive forces of the country. It is not sufficient to prove it to them in theory; we must prove it to them in practice, and we shall win these people to our side if we present the problem in a way

other than the theoretical propaganda of Communism. We say: Large-scale industry is the only means of saving the peasantry from want and starvation. Everyone agrees with this. But how can it be done? The restoration of industry on the old basis will require too much labour and time. We must give industry a more modern form, *i.e.*, we must adopt electrification. The latter requires much less time. We have already drawn up the plans for electrification. More than two hundred specialists—nearly all without exception opponents of the Soviet government—worked on this with keen interest, although they are not Communists. From the point of view of technical science they had to admit that this was the only correct way. Of course, we have a long way to go yet before the plan will be achieved. The cautious specialists say that the first series of undertakings will require not less than ten years. Professor Ballod calculated that three to four years are sufficient for the electrification of Germany. Russia, however, cannot be electrified even in ten years. In my theses I quote actual figures to show you how little we have been able to do in this sphere up to now. The figures I quote are so modest that it becomes immediately clear that they have more of a propagandist than a scientific significance. However, we must begin with propaganda. The Russian peasants who fought in the World War and lived in Germany for several years learnt there how modern farming should be carried on in order to conquer famine. We must carry on wide propaganda in this direction. Taken by themselves, these plans are of small practical significance, but their educational significance is enormous.

The peasants realise that something new must be created. They realise that this can be done, not by everybody working separately, but by the state as a whole. While prisoners of war in Germany the peasants learnt what the real basis of life, of cultural life, is. Twelve thousand kilowatts is a very modest beginning. Perhaps this will raise a smile on the lips of the foreigner who is familiar with electrification in America, Germany or Sweden. But he who laughs last laughs best. Yes, it is a modest beginning. But the peasantry is beginning to understand that new work must be carried out on a huge scale, and that it is already beginning. Enormous difficulties will have to be overcome. We shall try to establish

connections with the capitalist countries. We must not regret having to give the capitalists several hundred million kilograms of oil on condition that they help us to electrify our country.

And now in conclusion a few words about "pure democracy." I will read you a passage from Engels' letter to Bebel of December 11, 1884. He wrote:

"Pure democracy acquires a temporary importance when the moment of revolution comes as the most radical *bourgeois* party (it has already played itself off as such in Frankfurt) and as the final sheet anchor of the whole bourgeois and even feudal regime. . . . Thus between March and September 1848 the whole feudal-bureaucratic mass strengthened the liberals in order to hold down the revolutionary masses. . . . In any case our sole adversary on the day of the crisis and on the day after the crisis *will be the whole collective reaction which will group itself around pure democracy*, and this, I think, should not be lost sight of."¹

We cannot present our problems as the theoreticians do. The whole collective reaction, not only bourgeois, but also feudal, groups itself around "pure democracy." The German comrades know better than anyone else what "pure democracy" means, for Kautsky and the other leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals defend this "pure democracy" from the evil Bolsheviks. If we judge the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks not by what they say, but by what they do, we shall find that they are nothing more nor less than the representatives of petty-bourgeois "pure democracy." In the course of our revolution, during the last crisis, during the Kronstadt mutiny, they gave us a classical example of "pure democracy." There was very strong ferment among the peasantry, and discontent was also rife among the workers. They were weary and exhausted. After all, there is a limit to human endurance. They starved for three years, but it is impossible to starve for four and for five years. Naturally, starvation exercises enormous influence on political activity. How did the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks behave? They wavered all the time, and by that strengthened the bourgeoisie. The organisation of all the Russian parties abroad has revealed what the situation is now. The cleverest of the leaders of the Russian big bourgeoisie have said to themselves: "We cannot conquer in Russia

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 433-34.—Ed.

immediately. Hence our slogan must be: 'Soviets without the Bolsheviks.' " Milyukov, the leader of the Constitutional-Democrats, defended Soviet government from the attacks of the Socialist-Revolutionaries! This sounds very strange; but such are the practical dialectics which in our revolution we are studying in a peculiar way, from the practical experience of our struggle and of the struggle of our enemies. The Constitutional-Democrats defend "Soviets without the Bolsheviks" because they understand the position very well and hope to catch a section of the population with this bait. This is what the clever Constitutional-Democrats say. Not all Constitutional-Democrats are clever, of course, but some of them are, and these have acquired some experience from the French Revolution. At present the slogan is: "Fight against the Bolsheviks at any price, come what may." The whole of the bourgeoisie is now helping the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are now the vanguard of the whole of the reaction. We had the opportunity this spring of witnessing the fruits of this counter-revolutionary co-operation.

That is why we must continue our ruthless struggle against these elements. Dictatorship is a state of acute war. We are precisely in such a state. There is no military invasion at present; but we are isolated. On the other hand, we are not entirely isolated, in so far as the whole of the international bourgeoisie is not in a position to wage open war against us, because the whole of the working class, even though the majority is not yet Communistically inclined, is sufficiently class conscious to prevent intervention. The bourgeoisie is compelled to reckon with the temper of the masses even though the latter have not yet entirely come over to Communism. That is why the bourgeoisie cannot start an offensive against us, although the latter is not precluded. Until the final issue is decided, the state of awful war will continue. We say: "*A la guerre comme à la guerre*; we do not promise any freedom, nor any democracy." We tell the peasantry quite openly that they must choose: either the rule of the Bolsheviks—and we shall make every possible concession within the limits of retaining power, and later we shall lead them to Socialism—or the rule of the bourgeoisie. Everything else is deception, pure demagoguery.

Ruthless war must be declared against this deception, against this demagoguery. Our point of view is: for the time being—important concessions and the greatest caution, precisely because a certain equilibrium has set in, precisely because we are weaker than our combined enemies, because our economic base is too weak and we need a stronger economic base.

This, comrades, is what I wanted to say about our tactics, about the tactics of the Russian Communist Party.

NEW TIMES, OLD MISTAKES IN A NEW GUISE

EVERY peculiar turn in history calls forth some change in the form of the petty-bourgeois wavering which always occurs by the side of the proletariat, and which always penetrates the ranks of the proletariat to some degree.

Petty-bourgeois reformism, *i.e.*, servility to the bourgeoisie concealed by good little democratic and "Social"-Democratic phrases and impotent desires, and petty-bourgeois revolutionariness—menacing, puffed up and boastful in words, and a squib of disintegration, disunity and thoughtlessness in deeds—such are the two "streams" of these waverings. They are inevitable as long as the deep roots of capitalism exist. Their form is now changing in connection with the change that is taking place in the economic policy of the Soviet government.

The main *motif* of the Mensheviks is: "The Bolsheviks have reverted to capitalism; now they are done for. After all, the revolution, including the October Revolution, is a bourgeois revolution! Long live democracy! Long live reformism!" Irrespective of whether this is said purely in the Menshevik manner or in the Socialist-Revolutionary manner, in the spirit of the Second International or in that of the Two-and-a-Half International, in essence it is the same.

The main *motif* of the semi-anarchists, like the German "Communist Labour Party," or that section of our former Workers' Opposition which has left or is leaving the Party is: "The Bolsheviks have lost faith in the working class!" The slogans that are deduced from this are more or less similar to the Kronstadt slogans of the spring of 1921.

The task of the Marxists is to oppose, as soberly and as precisely as possible, the calculation of actual class forces and incontrovertible facts to the whining and panic of the philistines of reformism and of the philistines of revolutionariness.

Recall the main stages of our revolution. The first stage: the purely political stage, so to speak, from November 7 (October 25) to January 18 (5), to the dispersion of the Constituent Assembly. In a matter of ten weeks we did a hundred times more for the real and complete abolition of the survivals of feudalism in Russia than the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries did during the eight months *they* were in power, from March (February) to November (October) 1917. During that time the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, and abroad all the heroes of the Two-and-a-Half International, were despicable accomplices of reaction. The anarchists either stood aside in confusion, or else helped us. Was the revolution then bourgeois? Of course it was, in so far as our function was to complete the bourgeois-democratic revolution, in so far as there was not yet any class struggle among the "peasantry." But at the same time we did an enormous amount of work *over and above* the bourgeois revolution *for* the Socialist, proletarian revolution: 1) we developed, as never before, the forces of the working class in *its* utilisation of state power; 2) we struck a palpable blow that was felt all over the world against the fetishes of petty-bourgeois democracy, *i.e.*, the Constituent Assembly, and bourgeois "liberties" like freedom of the press for the rich; 3) we created a Soviet *type* of state, which was a gigantic step forward after 1793 and 1871.

The second stage: the Brest-Litovsk Peace. A riot of revolutionary phrases against peace—semi-patriotic phrases uttered by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, "Left" phrases uttered by a section of the Bolsheviks. "You have become reconciled with imperialism, you are doomed," argued the gloating and panic-stricken philistines. But the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks became reconciled with imperialism as participants in the bourgeois looting of the workers. We "became reconciled" and surrendered to the robbers part of our property in order to save the power of the workers, in order to be able to strike heavier blows at the robbers later. We heard the phrase about our "having lost faith in the working class" quite enough at that time, but we did not allow ourselves to be deceived by phrases.

The third stage: the civil war, from the Czecho-Slovaks and the

"Constituents" to Wrangel, 1918-20. Our Red Army did not exist at the beginning of the war. This army is still insignificant against any army of the Entente countries, if we compare their material forces. Nevertheless, we conquered in the struggle against the world-mighty Entente. The alliance between the peasants and the workers, under the leadership of the proletarian state, is raised—as an achievement of world history—to unprecedented heights. The Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries played the role of accomplices of the monarchy, open (ministers, organisers, preachers) and concealed (the more "subtle" and more despicable position of the Chernovs and Martovs, who pretended to wash their hands of the business, but actually used their pens against us). The anarchists also rushed about helplessly: a section helped us, while a section hindered us by their clamour against military discipline, or by their scepticism.

The fourth stage: the Entente is compelled to cease (for how long?) its intervention and blockade. The incredibly ruined country is just barely beginning to recover, is only just now realising the whole depth of the ruin, and is experiencing terrible suffering, cessation of industry, bad harvests, starvation and epidemics.

We have risen to the highest and at the same time most difficult stage in our world-historical struggle. At the present moment and in the present period the enemy is not what he was yesterday. The enemy is not a gang of White Guards commanded by landlords and assisted by all the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, and by the whole of the international bourgeoisie. The enemy is every-day economics in a small-peasant country with a ruined large-scale industry. The enemy is the petty-bourgeois element which surrounds us like the air and strongly permeates the ranks of the proletariat. The proletariat is declassed, *i.e.*, dislodged from its class groove. The factories and works are idle—the proletariat is weak, scattered, enfeebled. The petty-bourgeois element within the state is supported by the whole of the international bourgeoisie, which is still world-powerful.

Is this not enough to make one quail? Especially in the case of such heroes as the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, the knights of the Two-and-a-Half International, the helpless

anarchists and the lovers of "Left" phrases. "The Bolsheviks are reverting to capitalism, the Bolsheviks are done for, their revolution has not gone beyond the limits of a bourgeois revolution." We hear quite enough howling of this sort.

But we have grown accustomed to this.

We do not minimise the dangers. We look them straight in the face. We say to the workers and peasants: The danger is great; more solidarity, more endurance, more coolness; kick the noisy, panic-mongering Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries out with contempt.

The danger is great. The enemy is far stronger than we are economically, just as yesterday he was stronger than we were in the military sense. We know that, and in that knowledge lies our strength. We have already done so much to purge Russia of feudalism, to develop all the forces of the workers and the peasants; we have already done so much for the world struggle against imperialism and for the international proletarian movement freed from the banalities and despicableness of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, that panic-stricken cries no longer affect us. We have "justified" our revolutionary activity more than fully, and we have shown the whole world by our deeds what proletarian revolutionariness is capable of, compared with Menshevik-Socialist-Revolutionary "democracy" and cowardly reformism concealed by ceremonial phrases.

He who fears defeat on the eve of a great struggle may call himself a Socialist only by insulting the workers.

It is precisely because we are not afraid of looking danger in the face that we make the best use of our forces for the struggle—we weigh up the chances more soberly, cautiously and calculatingly—we make all concessions which strengthen us and break up the forces of the enemy (even a fool can see now that the "Brest Peace" was a concession which strengthened us and broke up the forces of international imperialism).

The Mensheviks are shouting that the food tax, free trade, the granting of concessions and state capitalism imply the collapse of Communism. Abroad the voice of the ex-Communist Levi has been added to that of the Mensheviks. This Levi had to be defended

as long as the mistakes he committed could be attributed to his reaction to the mistakes committed by the "Left" Communists, particularly in March 1921 in Germany; but this Levi cannot be defended when, instead of admitting that he is wrong, he slips into Menshevism all along the line.

To the howling Mensheviks we shall point out that even in the spring of 1918 the Communists proclaimed and advocated the idea of a *bloc*, of an alliance with state capitalism against the petty-bourgeois element. This was three years ago, in the first months of the Bolshevik victory! Even then the Bolsheviks took a sober view of things. And since then nobody has been able to refute the correctness of our sober calculations of the available forces.

Levi, who has slipped into Menshevism, advises the Bolsheviks (whose defeat by capitalism he "forecasts" in the same way as all the philistines, democrats, Social-Democrats and others forecast our doom if we dispersed the Constituent Assembly!) to appeal for the aid of the *whole* of the working class! Because, if you please, up to now only *part* of the working class has helped them!

Here what Levi says very remarkably coincides with what is said by those semi-anarchists and shouters, and partly certain members of the former "Workers' Opposition" who like to utter loud phrases about the Bolsheviks now having "lost faith in the strength of the working class." Both the Mensheviks and the anarchists transform the concept "strength of the working class" into a fetish; they are incapable of reflecting on its actual, concrete content. Instead of studying and analysing this content, they declaim.

The gentlemen of the Two-and-a-Half International who want to call themselves revolutionaries actually prove to be counter-revolutionaries in every serious situation because they fear the violent destruction of the old state apparatus, because they have no confidence in the strength of the working class. It was not a mere phrase we uttered when we said this about the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Co. Everybody knows that the October Revolution actually brought new forces, a new class to the front, that the best representatives of the proletariat are now governing Rus-

sia, have created an army, are leading this army, have created local government, etc., are managing industry, and so on and so forth. There may be some bureaucratic distortions in this administration, but we do not conceal this evil; we expose it, combat it. Those who, because of the struggle against the distortions of the new system, forget its content, forget that the working class has created and is guiding a state of the Soviet type, are incapable of thinking and simply throw words to the wind.

But the "strength of the working class" is not unlimited. If the flow of fresh forces from the working class is now weak, sometimes very weak, if, notwithstanding all the decrees, appeals and agitation, notwithstanding all the orders calling for "the promotion of non-party people," the flow of forces is still weak, mere declamations about "having lost faith in the strength of the working class" are merely empty phrasemongering.

We shall get no new forces without a certain "respite"; they can only grow slowly; they cannot grow except on the basis of restored large-scale industry (*i.e.*, speaking more precisely and concretely, on the basis of electrification). There is *no other* source from which they can be obtained.

After an enormous exertion of effort unprecedented in world history, the working class in a small-peasant, ruined country, the working class, which has become very largely declassed, needs an interval of time in which to allow new forces to grow, to be brought up to the front, and in which the old and worn-out forces could be "repaired." The creation of a military and state apparatus capable of victoriously withstanding the trials of 1917-21 was a great piece of work which engaged, absorbed and exhausted real (and not merely existing in clamorous declamations) "forces of the working class." One must understand this and reckon with necessity, or rather with the inevitable *slowing down* of the growth of *new* forces of the working class.

When the Mensheviks shout about the "Bonapartism" of the Bolsheviks (the apparatus, they say, relies on the troops against the will of "democracy"), they excellently express the tactics of the bourgeoisie, and Milyukov rightly supports them, supports the

"Kronstadt" (the spring of 1921) slogans. The bourgeoisie quite correctly takes into account the fact that the *real* "forces of the working class" now consist of the mighty vanguard of that class (the R.C.P., which, not all at once, but in the course of twenty-five years, won for itself by deeds the role, the name, the strength of the "vanguard" of the only revolutionary class) plus the elements which have been most weakened by becoming declassed, and which are most prone to give way to Menshevik and anarchist vacillations.

Actually, under the slogan of "More faith in the strength of the working class" the influence of the Mensheviks and anarchists is being increased: Kronstadt in the spring of 1921 proved and demonstrated this in a most striking manner. Every class conscious worker should expose and expel those who shout about our "lack of faith in the working class," because these shouters are in fact the accomplices of the bourgeoisie and the landlords, who are trying to weaken the proletariat for their own benefit by extending the influence of the Mensheviks and the anarchists. We will find that this is "the root of the trouble" if we ponder over the real content of the concept "strength of the working class"!

What are you doing, my dear sirs, to really promote non-party people to the main "front" of today, to the economic front, for the work of economic construction? This is the question that class conscious workers should put to the shouters. This is how the shouters can and always should be exposed, how it can always be proved that they, in fact, do not assist, but hinder economic construction, do not assist, but hinder the proletarian revolution, that they pursue, not proletarian, but petty-bourgeois strivings and serve an alien class.

Our slogans are: "Down with the shouters!" "Down with the unconscious accomplices of the White Guards who repeat the mistakes of the unfortunate Kronstadt mutineers of the spring of 1921!" "Take up businesslike practical work that will help to explain the peculiar features of the present situation and its tasks!" We need not phrases but deeds!

A sober calculation of these peculiar features and of the real, not fantastic, class forces tells us:

—After the period of achievements of proletarian creativeness in

the military, administrative and political fields unprecedented in world history, a period of much slower growth of new forces has set in, not accidentally, but inevitably, not owing to the fault of persons or parties, but owing to objective causes. In economic work more difficult, slower, and more gradual construction is inevitable; this arises from the very nature of this work compared with military, administrative and political work. It follows from its special difficulty, from its greater deep-rootedness, if one may so express it.

That is why we shall strive to determine our tasks in this new, higher stage of the struggle with very great, with trebled caution. We shall determine these tasks as modestly as possible; we shall make as many concessions as possible within the limits, of course, of what the proletariat *can* concede and remain the ruling class; we shall collect the moderate food tax as quickly as possible and allow the greatest possible freedom for the development, strengthening and restoration of peasant farming; we shall lease the enterprises that are not absolutely necessary for us to lessees, including private capitalists and foreign concessionaires. We need a *bloc*, or alliance, between the proletarian state and state capitalism against the petty-bourgeois element. We must achieve this alliance skilfully, following the rule: "Measure your cloth seven times before you cut." We shall leave to ourselves a smaller field of work, only what is absolutely necessary. We shall concentrate the enfeebled forces of the working class on something *less*, but we shall dig ourselves in all the more and put ourselves not once or twice, but many times to the test of practical experience. Step by step, inch by inch—for on the difficult road we have to travel, in the stern conditions in which we are living and amidst the dangers we have to face, the "troops" we have at our command *cannot* advance in any other way now. Those who find this work "dull," "uninteresting" and "unintelligible," those who turn up their noses, or become panic-stricken, or who intoxicate themselves with declamations about the absence of the "previous elation," the "previous enthusiasm," etc., had better be "relieved from work" and put in the archives, so as to prevent them from causing harm, for they are unwilling to ponder, or are incapable of pondering.

over the peculiar features of the present stage of the struggle.

In the midst of the tremendous ruin in the country and the exhaustion of the forces of the proletariat by a series of almost superhuman efforts, we are setting to work on the most difficult task of laying the foundation for really Socialist economy, for proper commodity exchange (or, more correctly, exchange of products) between industry and agriculture. The enemy is still far stronger than we are; anarchic, petty-trader, individual commodity exchange is undermining our work at every step. We clearly see the difficulties and will systematically and persistently overcome them. More local enterprise and initiative, more forces to the localities, more attention to their practical experience. The working class can heal its wounds, it can recover its proletarian "class strength"; the peasantry's confidence in proletarian leadership can become strong *only to the extent* that real success is achieved in restoring industry, in creating a proper state exchange of products, advantageous to both the peasants and the workers. And to the extent that we achieve these successes, we shall get an influx of new forces, not as quickly as every one of us would like, perhaps, but we shall get it.

To work, more slowly and cautiously, more consistently and persistently!

August 20, 1921

PURGING THE PARTY

THE purging of the Party has apparently developed into a serious and enormously important affair.

In some places the purging of the Party is proceeding mainly with the aid of the experience and suggestions of non-party workers; these suggestions are being heeded, and the representatives of the non-party proletarian masses are being treated with due consideration. This is the most valuable, the most important. If we really succeed in *this manner* in purging our Party from top to bottom, "without respect for persons," the gains for the revolution will really be enormous.

The gains for the revolution cannot now be what they were before. Their character inevitably changes in accordance with the transition from the war front to the economic front, the transition to the New Economic Policy, to the conditions demanding, first of all, increased productivity of labour, increased labour discipline. At such a time the principal gains for the revolution are internal gains, not striking, not outstanding, not immediately visible improvements in labour, the organisation of labour, results of labour; improvements in the sense that a fight is waged against the influence of the petty-bourgeois and petty-bourgeois-anarchist element which corrupts the proletariat and the Party. In order to achieve such an improvement the Party must be purged of elements which have become isolated from the masses (and, needless to say, of elements which disgrace the Party in the eyes of the masses). Of course, we shall not submit to everything the masses say, for the masses also yield to sentiments that are not in the least advanced, particularly in years of exceptional weariness and exhaustion resulting from excessive burdens and sufferings. But in appraising persons, in determining our attitude to those who have "attached themselves" to us, to those who have become "commissarised" and "bureau-

cratised," the suggestions of the non-party proletarian masses, and in many cases of the non-party peasant masses, are extremely valuable. The toiling masses have a fine instinct for the difference between honest and devoted Communists and those who arouse a revulsion of feeling in one who obtains his bread by the sweat of his brow, who enjoys no privileges and who has no "open door to the chief."

Purging the Party with the aid of the suggestions of the non-party toilers is a great thing. It will give us important results. It will make the Party a much stronger vanguard of the class than it was before; it will make it a vanguard that is more strongly linked with the class, more capable of leading it to victory amidst great difficulties and dangers.

As one of the particular tasks of the purging, I would point to the combing out of ex-Mensheviks. In my opinion, of the Mensheviks who joined the Party after the beginning of 1918, not more than one hundredth part should be allowed to remain in the Party, and even then, every one of them who is allowed to remain must be tested over and over again. Why? Because, as a trend, the Mensheviks in the period 1918-21 have displayed two qualities: first, the art of adapting themselves, of "attaching" themselves to the trend prevailing among the workers; and second, the art of faithfully serving the White Guards, serving them in deed while dissociating themselves from them in words. Both these qualities are the logical result of the whole history of Menshevism. It is sufficient to recall Axelrod's "workers' congress," the attitude of the Mensheviks towards the Constitutional-Democrats (and to the monarchy) in words and deeds, etc., etc. The Mensheviks "attached themselves" to the R.C.P. not only, and even not so much, out of Machiavellism (although ever since 1903 the Mensheviks have been showing that they are past masters in the art of bourgeois diplomacy), as out of their "adaptability." Every opportunist is distinguished for his adaptability (but not all adaptability is opportunism), and the Mensheviks, as opportunists, adapt themselves "on principle," so to speak, to the trend prevailing among the workers and assume a protective colouring just as a hare turns white in the winter. We must know this specific feature of

the Mensheviks and take it into account. And taking it into account means purging the Party of approximately ninety-nine out of every hundred of the Mensheviks who joined the R.C.P. after 1918, *i.e.*, when the victory of the Bolsheviks became at first probable and then certain.

The Party must be purged of rascals and bureaucrats, of dishonest or wavering Communists, and of Mensheviks who have repainted their "façade" but who in their hearts have remained Mensheviks.

September 20, 1921

THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY AND THE TASKS OF THE POLITICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS

*Report Delivered at the Second All-Russian Congress of Political
Education Departments, October 17, 1921*

COMRADES, I intend to devote the present report, or rather my present talk, to the New Economic Policy and the tasks of the Political Education Departments, as I understand them, in connection with this policy. It seems to me that it would be quite wrong to limit reports on questions that do not come within the scope of this or that congress to mere information about what is being done generally in the Party and in the Soviet Republic.

THE SHARP TURN OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT AND THE R.C.P.

While not in the least denying the usefulness of such information and the usefulness of conferences on all questions, I am nevertheless of the opinion that the main defect in the work of the majority of our congresses is the absence of direct and immediate connection with the practical problems that confront us. And in connection with the New Economic Policy, I should like to speak about these defects and about the New Economic Policy itself.

I will speak about the New Economic Policy briefly and in general terms. The overwhelming majority of you, comrades, are Communists, and, although some of you are very young, you are Communists who performed magnificent work in our general policy in the first years of our revolution. And, having performed a large share of this work, you cannot but see how sharp is the turn our Soviet government and our Communist Party have taken in adopting the economic policy which we call "new," new compared with our previous economic policy.

In essence, however, there is more of the old in this policy than there was in our previous economic policy.

Why? Because our previous economic policy, if we cannot say calculated (in the situation then prevailing we did little calculating), then to a certain degree assumed, we may say assumed without calculating, that there would be a direct transition from the old Russian economy to state production and distribution on Communist lines.

If we recall our own economic literature of previous times, if we recall what Communists wrote before we took power in Russia, and very soon after we took power—for example, in the beginning of 1918, when the first political assault upon old Russia ended in an enormous victory, when the Soviet Republic was created, when Russia emerged from the imperialist war, mutilated, it is true, but not so mutilated as she would have been had she continued to “defend the fatherland” as she was advised to do by the imperialists, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries—if we recall this we shall realise that in the first period, when we had only just completed the first part of the work of building up the Soviet government and had only just emerged from the imperialist war, we spoke much more cautiously and circumspectly about our tasks of economic construction than we acted in the second half of 1918, and in the course of the whole of 1919 and 1920.

THE ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON THE ROLE OF THE PEASANTRY IN 1918

Even if all of you were not yet active Party and Soviet workers at that time, at all events you have been able to make yourselves familiar, and of course you have made yourselves familiar, with such decisions as that of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the end of April 1918. This decision urged the necessity of taking peasant economy into account and was based on a report which took into account the role of state capitalism in the building up of Socialism in a peasant country; it was based on a report which emphasised the importance of personal, individual, one-man responsibility, emphasised the significance of this factor

in the administration of the country, as distinct from the political tasks of building up the government, and from military tasks.

OUR MISTAKE

In the beginning of 1918 we calculated on a certain period in which peaceful construction would be possible. On the signing of the Brest Peace it seemed that danger had been averted for a time, and that it would be possible to proceed with peaceful construction. But we deceived ourselves, because in 1918 a real military danger advanced upon us with the Czecho-Slovak mutiny and the beginning of the civil war which dragged on to 1920. Partly as a result of the military problems that overwhelmed us and what seemed to be the desperate position the republic was in at that time, when the imperialist war came to an end—as a result of these circumstances and a number of others we made the mistake of deciding to proceed directly to Communist production and distribution. We decided that in accordance with the food quotas the peasants would give us the required quantity of grain, which we would distribute among the factories and works, thus achieving Communist production and distribution.

I cannot say that we pictured this plan as definitely and as vividly as that, but we acted approximately on those lines. Unfortunately, this is a fact. I say unfortunately, because a very brief experience convinced us of the error of this line of argument, which contradicted what we had written previously about the transition from capitalism to Socialism, namely, that it would be impossible to approach even the lower stage of Communism without an intervening period of Socialist accounting and control. Since 1918, when the problem of taking over power arose and was explained by the Bolsheviks to the whole people, our theoretical literature has been definitely emphasising the necessity of a long and complex period of transition from capitalist society (and the less developed that society the longer the period would be), of transition through Socialist accounting and control to even the first approach to Communist society.

A STRATEGICAL RETREAT

At that time, when we were obliged to take the necessary steps in construction in the heat of the civil war, we as it were forgot about this. And the essence of our new policy lies in the fact that we suffered severe defeat on this point and began to make a strategic retreat: "Let us retreat and reorganise anew, but on a firmer basis, before we are utterly defeated," we said. If the Communists put the question of the New Economic Policy intelligently, there cannot be the slightest doubt in their minds that we suffered a very severe economic defeat on the economic front. And it is inevitable, of course, that some people should become very despondent, almost panic-stricken, and in regard to the retreat these people did become quite panic-stricken. This is inevitable. Did not the Red Army retreat? It started its victory by fleeing from the enemy, and on every front where this happened some people passed through a period of panic. But on every occasion, on the Kolchak front, on the Denikin front, on the Yudenich front, on the Polish front and the Wrangel front, it turned out that after we had been thoroughly thrashed once, and sometimes more than once, we justified the proverb: "A man who has been thrashed is worth two who have not." After being thrashed, we began to advance slowly, systematically and cautiously.

Of course, tasks on the economic front are much more difficult than tasks on the war front, but there is a resemblance between these two elementary examples of strategy. With the attempt to pass to Communism, we in the spring of 1921 suffered a more serious defeat on the economic front than any defeat inflicted upon us by Kolchak, Denikin or Pilsudski, a defeat that was much more serious, more material and dangerous. The seriousness of this defeat lay in the fact that the upper reaches of our economic policy were found to be isolated from the lower and failed to create that revival of productive forces which the programme of our Party regards as the fundamental and urgent task.

The food quotas in the rural districts, this directly Communist approach to the problem of construction in the towns, hindered the revival of productive forces and proved to be the main cause of the

profound economic and political crisis that we experienced in the spring of 1921. That is why what, from the point of view of our line, of our policy, cannot be called anything else than a severe defeat and retreat was necessary. Moreover, it cannot be said that this retreat was like the retreat of the Red Army, a completely orderly retreat to previously prepared positions. It is true that the positions had been prepared beforehand. This can be proved by comparing the decisions our Party adopted in the spring of 1921 with the decision of April 1918 which I have mentioned. The positions had been prepared beforehand, but the retreat to these positions took place (and is still taking place in many places in the provinces) in disorder, and even in extreme disorder.

THE MEANING OF THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

Here the task of the Political Education Departments—to combat this—comes to the forefront. The main problem, from the point of view of the New Economic Policy, is to take advantage of the situation that has arisen as speedily as possible.

The New Economic Policy means the substitution of a tax for the quotas, it means transition to the restoration of capitalism to a considerable degree. To what degree we do not know. Concessions to foreign capitalists (it is true that we have granted only a very few, particularly compared with the number of offers we have made), leasing enterprises to private capitalists—this is the direct restoration of capitalism, and it is connected with the very roots of the New Economic Policy; for the abolition of quotas means for the peasant freedom to trade in his surplus agricultural produce, the part left over after the tax is collected, and the tax takes only a small share of his produce. The peasants constitute an enormous part of the whole population, and of the whole of our economy, and that is why capitalism cannot but grow out of this soil of free trade.

This is the most elementary economics, taught by the very rudiments of economic science, and in Russia, in addition, taught by every petty trader, a creature who makes us very familiar with economics independently of economic and political science. And

from the point of view of strategy, the root question is: who will be the first to take advantage of the new situation? The whole question is: whom will the peasantry follow—the proletariat, which is striving to build Socialist society, or the capitalist, who says, "Let us turn back, it is safer; we don't know what this Socialism they have invented is"?

WHO WILL WIN, THE CAPITALIST OR THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT?

This is the issue in the present war: who will win, who will be the first to take advantage of the situation—the capitalist, whom we are allowing to come in by the door, and even several doors (and many doors we are not aware of, and which open without us and in spite of us), or the proletarian state power? What economic basis can the latter rely on? On the one hand, on the improvement in the conditions of the population. In this connection we must remember the peasants. It is absolutely incontrovertible and obvious to all that, in spite of the awful calamity of the famine, an improvement in the conditions of the population, if we leave this calamity out of account, took place precisely in connection with the change in our economic policy.

On the other hand, if capitalism gains, industrial production will grow, and the proletariat will also grow. The capitalists will gain from our policy and will create an industrial proletariat, which in our country, owing to the war and the desperate poverty and ruin, has become declassed, *i.e.*, dislodged from its class groove, and has ceased to be a proletariat. The proletariat is the class which is engaged in the production of material values in large-scale capitalist industrial enterprises. Since large-scale capitalist industry has been destroyed, since the factories and works are at a standstill, the proletariat has disappeared. Sometimes it was considered to exist officially, but it was not bound together by economic roots.

The restoration of capitalism will mean the restoration of the proletarian class engaged in the production of socially useful material values, engaged in large factories employing machinery, and not in profiteering, not in making cigarette-lighters for sale,

and other "work" that is not very useful, but quite inevitable when our industry is in a state of ruin.

The whole question is: who will get there first? If the capitalists succeed in organising first, they will drive away the Communists, and that will be the end of it. We must look at these things soberly: who will win? Or else the proletarian state proves capable, relying on the peasantry, of keeping the bridle on Messieurs the capitalists in order to direct capitalism along state grooves and to create a capitalism that will be subordinate to the state and serve the state. The question must be put soberly. All sorts of "ideology," all sorts of arguments about political liberty, are arguments we can hear quite a lot of, especially if we turn to Russia abroad, Russia No. 2, where there are scores of daily newspapers of all political parties, where all these liberties are extolled in all tunes, in all the notes in the musical scale. All this is mere chatter, phrases. We must learn to get away from these phrases.

THE FIGHT WILL BE STILL MORE SEVERE

During the past four years we have fought many severe battles, and we have learnt that a severe battle is one thing and talking about severe battles, particularly by bystanders, is another thing. We must learn to get away from all this "ideology" and all this chatter and to see the substance of a thing. And the substance is that the fight will be even more desperate and more severe than the fight against Kolchak and Denikin. That is because the latter were military fights, something familiar. Such fights have been fought for hundreds and thousands of years. Enormous progress has been made in the art of slaughtering people in war.

It is true that nearly every landlord had at his headquarters Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who talked loudly about government by the people, Constituent Assemblies, and about the Bolsheviks having violated all liberties.

Nevertheless, it is much easier to solve military problems than the one that confronts us now. Military problems could be solved by assault, raids, enthusiasm, by the sheer physical force of the hosts of workers and peasants who saw the landlords marching

against them. Now there are no avowed landlords. Some of the Wrangels, Kolchaks and Denikins have followed Nicholas Romanov, and some have sought refuge abroad. The people no longer see the open enemy as they formerly saw the landlord and capitalist. The people cannot clearly picture to themselves that the enemy is now within our own midst, that it is the very same enemy, that the revolution is on the verge of a precipice, which all previous revolutions reached and recoiled from; they cannot picture this to themselves because they suffer from profound ignorance and illiteracy. And it is difficult to say how long it will take all sorts of extraordinary commissions to liquidate this illiteracy by extraordinary means.

How can the people understand that in place of Kolchak, Wrangel and Denikin we have within our midst the enemy who has killed all previous revolutions? If the capitalists achieve ascendancy over us, it will mean a return to the old. And this is confirmed by the experience of all previous revolutions. The task of our Party is to spread the realisation of the fact that the enemy within our midst is anarchic capitalism and anarchic commodity exchange. We must clearly understand this essence of the struggle and strive to make the broadest masses of workers and peasants understand it—"Who will defeat whom?" "Who will win?" The dictatorship of the proletariat is a most severe and most furious struggle, in which the proletariat is obliged to fight the whole world, for the whole world was against us and supported Kolchak and Denikin.

Now the bourgeoisie of the whole world is supporting the bourgeoisie of Russia, which is still ever so much stronger than we are. But we do not become panic-stricken because of this; they had stronger military forces than we had; nevertheless, they failed to crush us in war, although, being immeasurably superior to us in artillery and aircraft, they should have found it much easier to do so. Perhaps they would have succeeded in doing so had they mobilised in time a number of army corps belonging to this or that capitalist state that was fighting us, and had they not begrudged a loan of several millions in gold to Kolchak.

However, they failed because the consciousness that they were

wrong and we were right penetrated the minds of the masses of the British soldiers who came to Archangel, and of the masses of sailors who compelled the French fleet to leave Odessa. Now we are being attacked by forces which are also much stronger than we are. And in order to conquer we must rely upon our last source of strength. Our last source of strength is the masses of workers and peasants, their class consciousness and organisation.

Either the proletarian organised power—and the advanced workers and a small section of the advanced peasants will understand this task and will manage to organise a popular movement around themselves—and then we shall be victorious; or we fail to do that, and the enemy, possessing technical forces superior to ours, will inevitably defeat us.

IS THIS THE LAST FIGHT?

The dictatorship of the proletariat is fierce war. The proletariat has conquered in one country, but it is still weaker internationally. It must unite all the workers and peasants around itself in the conviction that the war has not yet come to an end. Although in our song we sing, "The last fight let us face," unfortunately it is not quite true, it is not our last fight. Either you succeed in merging the workers and peasants in this fight, or you will fail to achieve victory.

Never before in history has there been such a fight as we are waging now; but wars between peasants and landlords have occurred more than once in history, ever since the earliest times of slavery. Such wars have occurred more than once; but a war waged by the state against the bourgeoisie of its own country and against the united bourgeoisie of all countries has never occurred before.

The outcome of the struggle depends upon whether we succeed in organising the small peasants on the basis of the development of their productive forces and proletarian state assistance for this development, or whether the capitalists succeed in subordinating them. The same issue arose in scores of revolutions in the past, but the world has never seen such a struggle as we are waging

now. The people cannot have any experience of such wars. We ourselves must create, and in this effort we can rely only on the class consciousness of the workers and peasants. This is the motto and the great difficulty of this task.

WE MUST NOT CALCULATE ON A DIRECTLY COMMUNIST TRANSITION

We must not calculate on a directly Communist transition. We must build on the basis of the peasant's personal incentive. We are told, "The personal incentive of the peasant means restoring private property." But we have never interfered with the private ownership of articles of consumption and of tools as far as the peasant is concerned. We abolished the private ownership of land; the peasant has carried on husbandry without the private ownership of land, for example on rented land. This system existed in very many countries. There is nothing economically impossible about that. The difficulty lies in creating personal incentive. We must give every specialist an incentive to become interested in the development of production.

Have we been able to do that? No, we have not. We thought that production and distribution would go on in a country with a declassed proletariat at Communist bidding. We must change this now, otherwise we shall not be able to make the proletariat familiar with this transition. No such problems have ever arisen in history before. We tried to solve this problem in an onrush, by a frontal attack, as it were, but we suffered defeat. Such mistakes occur in every war, and they are not even regarded as mistakes. If a frontal attack fails, we shall try a flank attack, we shall operate by means of siege and sapping.

THE PRINCIPLE OF PERSONAL INCENTIVE

And we say that every important branch of national economy must be built up on the principle of personal incentive. Collective discussion, but individual responsibility. We suffer at every step from our inability to apply this principle; the whole of the New Economic Policy demands that this line of demarcation be drawn with absolute sharpness and distinction. When the people passed into

new economic conditions they began feverishly to discuss what would come of it, and how things should be reorganised. We could not have started anything without this general discussion because for decades and centuries the people have been prohibited from discussing anything, and the revolution could not develop without passing through a period of general, universal holding of meetings on all questions. . . .

This created confusion in many things. This is what happened, it was inevitable, but it must be said that it was not dangerous. Only when we learn in time to separate what is required for meetings from what is required for administration shall we succeed in raising the position of the Soviet Republic to its proper level. Unfortunately, we have not yet learnt to do this, and the majority of congresses are conducted in a manner far from business-like.

In plentitude of congresses we excel all other states in the world. Not a single democratic republic holds as many congresses as we do, nor could they permit it.

We must remember that ours is a country that has suffered great loss and impoverishment, and that we must teach it to hold meetings in such a way as not to confuse, as I have said, what is required for meetings with what is required for administration. Hold meetings, but administer without wavering; administer more firmly than the capitalist administered before you. If you do not, you will fail to conquer him. You must remember that administration must be stricter and firmer than it was before.

After many months of meetings, the discipline of the Red Army was not inferior to the discipline of the old army. Strict, stern measures were adopted, even shooting, measures that were not even adopted in the old army. Philistines wrote and howled, "There, the Bolsheviks have introduced the death penalty." We must say, "Yes, we have introduced it, and have done so deliberately."

We must say that either those who wanted to cause our destruction must perish, those who we think must perish—and in that case our Soviet Republic will live—or the capitalists will live, and in that case the republic must perish. In an impoverished country,

either those who cannot stand the pace must perish, or the whole workers' and peasants' republic must perish. There is not, nor can there be, any third path, nor can there be any sentimentality. Sentimentality is no less a crime than cowardice in war. Whoever departs from discipline now is permitting the enemy to penetrate our midst.

That is why I say that the New Economic Policy is important also from the point of view of tuition. You here are talking about how it is necessary to teach. You must reach the point of saying that there can be no place among us for the half-educated. When Communism comes, tuition will be milder. Now, however, I say, tuition in the face of death cannot but be stern.

SHALL WE BE ABLE TO WORK FOR OURSELVES?

We had deserters from the army, and also from the labour fronts. We must say: You have worked for the capitalist, for the exploiter, and of course you worked badly. But now you are working for yourselves, for the workers' and peasants' government. Remember that the question at issue is: shall we be able to work for ourselves? If we are not, I repeat, our republic must perish. And we say, as we said in the army: Those who wanted to cause our destruction must perish, and here we shall adopt the sternest disciplinary measures; and we shall save our country and our republic will live.

That is what our line must be; that is why (among other things) we need the New Economic Policy.

Manage, all of you! The capitalists will be by your side, and so will the foreign capitalists, concessionaires and leaseholders; they will knock hundreds per cent of profit out of you, they will enrich themselves by your side. Let them. Meanwhile you will learn from them the art of management, and only when you do that will you be able to build up a Communist republic. From the point of view of the necessity of learning quickly, any slowing down would be a great crime. And we must accept this tuition, this severe, stern, and sometimes even cruel tuition, because there is no other path open to us.

You must remember that our Soviet land is impoverished after many years of trials, and is surrounded not by a Socialist France or a Socialist England, which could help us with their highly developed technique and their highly developed industry. No! We must remember that all their highly developed technique and their highly developed industry belong to the capitalists who are fighting us.

We must remember that we must either exert tremendous effort in everyday labour or submit to inevitable doom.

Owing to the present circumstances, the whole world is developing faster than we are. While the capitalist world is developing, it is directing all its forces against us. That is how the question stands! That is why special attention must be devoted to this struggle.

Owing to our cultural backwardness, we cannot bring about the doom of capitalism by means of a frontal attack. Had our cultural level been different, we could have done this more directly, and perhaps other countries will do it in this way when their turn comes to build their Communist republics. But we cannot do it in the direct way.

The state must learn to trade in such a way as to make industry satisfy the needs of the peasantry, so that the peasantry may satisfy their needs by means of trade. We must arrange things in such a way that every toiler may take a hand in strengthening the workers' and peasants' state. Only when we succeed in doing this can large-scale industry be created.

We must make the masses appreciate this, and not only appreciate it, but put it into practice. This, I say, suggests what the task of the Chief Political Education Department should be. After every great political revolution the people require much time to assimilate the change. And here the question arises: have the people assimilated the lessons that were taught them? Unfortunately, the answer to this question must be in the negative. Had they assimilated the lessons we should have started creating large-scale industry much more quickly, and much earlier.

After the problem of the greatest political revolution in the world had been solved, other problems confronted us, cultural

problems, which may be called "minor affairs." This political revolution must be assimilated, it must be made intelligible to the masses of the population, we must see to it that the political revolution remains something more than a declaration.

OBSELETE METHODS

At one time we needed declarations, manifestoes and decrees. We have quite enough of these. At one time we needed these things in order to show the people how and what we want to build, what new and hitherto unseen things we are striving for. But can we continue showing the people what we want to build? No. Even the simplest worker will begin to sneer at us and say: "What's the use of your keeping on showing us what you want to build? Show us that you can build. If you can't build, your way is not ours, and you can go to hell!" And he will be right.

The time when it was necessary politically to depict great tasks has gone; the time has come when these tasks must be carried out in practice. Now we are confronted with cultural tasks, the task of assimilating this political experience, which must, and can, be put into practice. Either we lay an economic foundation for the political gains of the Soviet government, or all these gains must perish. This foundation has not yet been laid. This is precisely what we must set to work to do.

Raising the level of culture is one of our most immediate tasks. And this is the task of the Political Education Departments, if they can serve the cause of "political education," which is the title they have adopted for themselves. It is not difficult to adopt a title, but how about acting up to it? Let us hope that after this congress we shall have precise information about this. A commission for the liquidation of illiteracy was set up on July 19, 1920. Before coming to this congress, I deliberately read the decree establishing this commission. It says: All-Russian Commission for the Liquidation of Illiteracy. . . . More than that—Extraordinary Commission for the Liquidation of Illiteracy. Let us hope that after this congress we shall receive information about what has been done in this sphere, and in how many gubernias, that we shall receive a

precise report. But the very fact that it was found necessary to set up an Extraordinary Commission for the Liquidation of Illiteracy shows that we are (what is the mildest term I can use for it?) well, something like semi-savages, because in a country that was not semi-savage it would be considered a disgrace to have to set up an Extraordinary Commission for the Liquidation of Illiteracy. In such countries illiteracy is liquidated in schools. There they have tolerable schools, where people are taught. What are they taught? First of all they are taught to read and write. But if this elementary problem has not yet been solved, it is ridiculous to talk about a New Economic Policy.

THE GREATEST MIRACLE OF ALL

What is the use of talking about a new policy? God grant that we manage to stick to the old policy if we have to resort to extraordinary measures to liquidate illiteracy. That is obvious. But it is still more obvious that we performed miracles in the military and other spheres. But the greatest miracle of all, in my opinion, would be if the Commission for the Liquidation of Illiteracy were completely liquidated, and if no proposals, such as I have heard here, were made to separate it from the Commissariat for Education. If there is such a proposal, I think—and you will agree with me if you ponder over it—that it is necessary to set up an extraordinary commission to liquidate certain bad proposals.

More than that: it is not sufficient to liquidate illiteracy; it is necessary to build up Soviet economy, and in this literacy alone will not carry you very far. We must raise culture to a very much higher level. A man must make use of his ability to read and write, he must have something to read, newspapers and propaganda pamphlets, which should be properly distributed and should reach the people and not get lost in transit, as they do now, so that not more than half of them are read and the rest are used in offices for some purpose or other; perhaps not more than one-fourth reach the people. We must learn to make full use of the scanty resources that we do possess.

That is why, in connection with the New Economic Policy, we

must ceaselessly propagate the idea that political education calls for the raising of the level of culture at all costs. We must try to make the ability to read and write serve the purpose of raising the level of culture, try to make the peasant learn to read and write for the purpose of improving his farm and his state.

The Soviet laws are very good laws because they provide everyone with the opportunity of fighting against bureaucracy and red tape, an opportunity which is not provided for the workers and peasants in any capitalist state. But does anybody take advantage of this opportunity? Hardly anybody does! Not only the peasants, but an enormous percentage of the Communists do not know how to take advantage of the Soviet laws to combat red tape and bureaucracy, or such a truly Russian phenomenon as bribery. What hinders the fight against this phenomenon? Our laws? Our propaganda? On the contrary! We have any number of laws! Why have we achieved no success in this struggle? Because it cannot be waged by propaganda alone. It can be waged only if the masses of the people assist in it. No less than half our Communists are incapable of fighting, not to speak of those who hinder the fight. It is true that ninety-nine per cent of you are Communists, and you know that we are performing an operation on these latter Communists, an operation which is being performed by the Party Purging Commission,¹ and there is hope that we shall remove a hundred thousand or so of them. Some say two hundred thousand, and I like that figure much better.

I hope very much that we shall expel a hundred thousand to two hundred thousand Communists who have "attached" themselves to the Party and who are not only unable to fight against red tape and bribery, but even hinder the fight.

THE TASKS OF THE POLITICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS

The fact that we shall purge the Party of a couple of hundred thousand will be useful, but this is only a tiny fraction of what we must do. The Political Education Departments must adapt all their work to this purpose. Illiteracy must be combated, but literacy

¹ See the preceding article.—*Ed.*

alone is not enough; we need the culture which teaches how to fight red tape and bribery. This is a sore which cannot be healed by military victories and political reformations. In essence, this sore cannot be healed by military victories and political reformations, it can only be healed by raising the level of culture. And this is the task that devolves upon the Political Education Departments.

Workers in the Political Education Departments must understand their tasks not in the bureaucratic manner that is also frequently observed when people discuss the question of whether representatives of Gubernia Political Education Departments should or should not be appointed to Gubernia Economic Councils. Excuse me for saying so, but I do not think you should be appointed to any office; you should fulfil your tasks as plain citizens. When you are appointed to some office you become bureaucratised; but if you have to deal with the people, and if you politically enlighten them, experience will show you that there will be no bribery among a politically enlightened people. At present bribery surrounds you on all sides. You will be asked, "What must be done to abolish bribery; to prevent so-and-so on the Executive Committee from taking bribes? Teach us how to abolish this." And if a political educator replies, "This does not come within my department; we have published pamphlets and manifestoes on this subject," the people will say, "You are a bad Party member; it is true that this does not come within your department, we have the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection for that, but are you not a member of the Party?" You have adopted the title of political educators. When you adopted this title you were warned not to adopt a flashy title, but to adopt something more modest. But you wanted to adopt the title of political educators, and this title implies a great deal. You did not undertake to teach the people the alphabet, you undertook to educate them politically. You may be told, "It is a good thing that you are teaching the people to read and write and to carry on economic campaigns, that is all very well; but it is not political education, because political education means summing up all this."

We are carrying on propaganda against barbarism and against

sores like bribery, and I hope you are doing the same; but political education does not consist entirely of this sort of propaganda. It consists of practical results. It consists of teaching the people how to achieve these results, and of setting an example to others, not as members of an Executive Committee, but as plain citizens who, being politically better educated than the others, are able not only to hurl abuse at red tape—this is very widely practised among us—but to show how this evil can really be conquered. This is a very difficult art, which cannot be acquired without raising the general level of culture, without making the masses of workers and peasants more cultured than they are now. And it is to this task that I should like most of all to draw the attention of the Chief Political Education Department.

I should now like to sum up all that I have said and to suggest practical solutions for the problems that confront the Gubernia Political Education Departments.

THE THREE PRINCIPAL ENEMIES

In my opinion, three principal enemies now confront one, irrespective of one's departmental function, three tasks that confront the political educator, if he is a Communist, and most of the political educators are. The three principal enemies that confront him are the following: the first enemy—Communist vanity; the second enemy—illiteracy, and the third enemy—bribery.

The First Enemy—Communist Vanity

Communist vanity is characteristic of a man who is still a member of the Communist Party, who has not yet been combed out, and who imagines that he can solve all his problems by issuing Communist decrees. Because he is still a member of the governing party and is employed in such-and-such government institutions, he imagines that this entitles him to talk about the results of political education. Nothing of the sort! This is only Communist vanity. The point is to learn to impart political education; but this we have not yet learnt to do, and we have not yet a proper approach to it.

The Second Enemy—Illiteracy

In regard to the second enemy, illiteracy, I can say that as long as there is such a thing as illiteracy in our country it is too difficult to talk about political education. This is not a political problem, it is a condition without which it is impossible to talk about politics. An illiterate person is outside politics, he must first of all be taught the alphabet. Without that there can be no politics, without that there are only rumours, gossip, fables and prejudices, but not politics.

The Third Enemy—Bribery

Finally, if such a thing as bribery is possible, it is no use talking about politics. Here we have not even an approach to politics, here it is impossible to pursue politics, because all measures are left hanging in the air and produce absolutely no results. A law applied in conditions which permit of widespread bribery can only make things worse. Under such conditions no politics whatever can be pursued, the fundamental condition for ~~engaging~~ engaging in politics is lacking. In order to be able to depict to the people our political problems, in order to be able to say to the masses of the people, "These are the things we must strive for" (and this is what we should have done!) we must understand that what is required here is raising the cultural level of the masses. And we must achieve this level of culture. Otherwise it will be impossible really to solve our problems.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MILITARY PROBLEMS AND CULTURAL PROBLEMS

Cultural problems cannot be solved as quickly as political and military problems. You must understand that the conditions of progress are different now from what they were before. It is possible to achieve a political victory in the epoch of acute crisis within a few weeks. It is possible to obtain victory in war within a few months. But it is impossible to achieve a cultural victory in such a short time; by the very nature of the case a longer period is required, and we must adapt ourselves to this longer period,

calculate our work accordingly, and display the maximum of perseverance, persistence and system. Without these qualities it is impossible even to start on the work of political education. And the only measure of the results of political education is the improvement in economy. We must not only abolish illiteracy and bribery, which arises on the soil of illiteracy, we must get the people really to imbibe our propaganda, our guidance and our pamphlets, so that the result may be an improvement in national economy.

These are the tasks of political education in connection with the New Economic Policy, and I hope that our congress will help us to achieve a great success.

October 1921

THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

*Report Delivered at the Seventh Moscow Gubernia Party
Conference, October 29, 1921*

COMRADES, in starting my report on the New Economic Policy, I should like to say, first of all, that I do not take my subject to be what many of you here perhaps anticipate, or rather I can deal with only one small part of this subject. Naturally, on this question one is mainly interested in obtaining an appraisal of the recent laws and decisions of the Soviet government on the New Economic Policy. Interest in such a subject is the more legitimate the more numerous these decisions are, and the more imperatively necessary it is to formulate, regulate and summarise them; and as far as I can judge from my observations on the Council of People's Commissars, the need for this is felt very acutely. No less legitimate would be the desire to ascertain the facts and figures which are already available on the results of the New Economic Policy. Of course, the number of confirmed and tested facts is still very small, but they are available, nevertheless. And, undoubtedly, it is absolutely necessary to watch these facts and to try to summarise them in order to ascertain how the New Economic Policy is working. But I cannot deal with either of these subjects, and if you are interested in them I am sure you will be able to find reporters on them. What interests me is another subject, namely, the tactics, or, if one may so express it, the revolutionary strategy which we have adopted in connection with our change of policy, and the appraisal of the extent to which this policy corresponds to our general understanding of our tasks, on the one hand, and of the extent to which Party knowledge and Party consciousness at the present day have risen to the level of understanding that this New Economic Policy is necessary. This is the special question to which I should like exclusively to devote my talk.

First of all I am interested in the question: in what sense may we say, in appraising our New Economic Policy, that the previous economic policy was a mistaken one; would it be correct to describe it as a mistake, and finally, if it was a mistake, in what sense can this appraisal be regarded as useful and necessary?

It seems to me that this question is important in order to estimate to what extent agreement prevails in our Party on the most fundamental questions of our present economic policy.

Should the Party's attention be now concentrated exclusively on certain definite questions of this economic policy, or should it be devoted, at least from time to time, to appraising the general conditions of this policy, and to the question of whether Party consciousness, Party interest and Party attention correspond to these general conditions? I think that the present position is that our New Economic Policy has not yet become sufficiently clear to broad Party circles, and unless the mistake of the previous economic policy is clearly understood we cannot successfully accomplish our work of creating the foundations and of finally determining the direction of our New Economic Policy.

In order to explain my idea and to reply to the question of the sense in which we can, and in my opinion should, say that our previous economic policy was mistaken, I should like to take for the purpose of comparison an episode in the Russo-Japanese War, which I think will enable us to obtain a clearer picture of the relationship between the various systems and political methods in a revolution such as is taking place in our country. The episode I have in mind is the capture of Port Arthur by the Japanese General Nogi. The main thing that interests me in this episode is that the capture of Port Arthur was accomplished in two absolutely different stages. The first stage was that of furious assaults, which ended in failure and cost the celebrated Japanese commander very heavy losses. The second stage was the extremely arduous, extremely difficult and slow method of siege, according to all the rules of the art; and after a time it was precisely by this method that the problem of capturing the fortress was solved. If we examine these facts, the question naturally arises: in what sense may we appraise

the Japanese general's first mode of operation against the fortress of Port Arthur as mistaken? Were the direct assaults on the fortress mistaken? And if they were mistaken, under what conditions should the Japanese army have admitted that they were mistaken, in order to correctly achieve its object; to what extent should it have realised this mistake?

At first sight, of course, the answer to this question would seem to be a simple one. If a number of assaults on Port Arthur proved to be ineffective—and that was the case—if the losses incurred by the assailants were incredibly heavy—and that too was undeniably the case—it is evident that the tactics of direct assault upon the fortress of Port Arthur were mistaken, and this requires no further proof. On the other hand, however, it is not difficult to see that in solving a problem in which there are very many unknown factors, it is very difficult, without the necessary practical experience, to determine with absolute, or at all events approximate precision the mode of operation to be adopted against the enemy fortress. It was impossible to determine this without taking practical measures to ascertain the strength of the fortress, the strength of its fortifications, the state of its garrison, etc. Without this it was impossible for even the best of commanders, such as General Nogi undoubtedly was, to solve the problem of the tactics to be adopted for the purpose of capturing the fortress. On the other hand, the successful conclusion of the war called for the speediest possible solution of this problem. At the same time it was highly probable that even very heavy losses, if they were necessary for the purpose of capturing the fortress by direct assault, would be compensated by the result. It would release the Japanese army for operations in other theatres of war and would achieve one of the fundamental objects of the war, before the enemy, *i.e.*, the Russian army, could throw large forces to the distant theatre of war, train them better, and perhaps reach a position in which it would have been much stronger than the Japanese army.

If we examine the development of military operations as a whole, and the conditions in which the Japanese army operated, we shall have to come to the conclusion that the storming of Port Arthur was not only a display of great heroism on the part of the

army which proved capable of suffering such great losses, but that it was the only possible tactics to adopt in the conditions then prevailing, *i.e.*, in the beginning of operations. For that reason these tactics were necessary and useful; for without testing the strength of the fortress by the practical attempt to carry it by assault, without testing the power of resistance of the enemy, there would have been no grounds for adopting the more prolonged and arduous method of struggle, which, by the very fact that it was prolonged, harboured a number of other dangers. From the point of view of the operations as a whole, we cannot but regard the first stage, consisting of direct assaults, as a necessary and useful stage, because, I repeat, without this experience the Japanese army could not have learnt sufficiently the concrete conditions of the struggle. What was the position of this army when the period of fighting against the enemy fortress by means of direct assault came to an end? "Thousands and thousands of men have fallen, and we shall lose more thousands, but we shall not take the fortress in this way"—such was the position when some, or the majority, began to come to the conclusion that the tactics of direct assault must be abandoned and siege tactics adopted. Since the previous tactics proved mistaken, they must be abandoned, and all that was connected with them must be regarded as a hindrance to the operations and should be dropped. Direct assaults must cease, siege tactics must be adopted, the disposition of the troops must be changed, stores and munitions must be redistributed, and, of course, certain methods and operations must be changed. What had been done before must be resolutely, precisely and clearly regarded as a mistake in order to remove all hindrances to the development of the new strategy and tactics, to the development of operations, which were now to be conducted on entirely new lines. As we know, the new tactics ended in complete victory, although it took a much longer time to achieve than was anticipated.

I think this example is useful to illustrate the position in which our revolution found itself when solving its Socialist problems in the sphere of economic construction. Two periods stand out distinctly in this connection. On the one hand, the period approximately from the beginning of 1918 to the spring of 1921;

and on the other hand, the period from the spring of 1921 to the present day.

If you recall the declarations, official and unofficial, which our Party made from the end of 1917 to the beginning of 1918, you will see that even at that time we imagined that the development of the revolution, the development of the struggle, could proceed either along a relatively short road, or along a very long and difficult road. But in appraising the possible development, we very largely—I can hardly recall an exception—started out with the assumption, perhaps not always openly expressed but always tacitly taken for granted, that there would be a direct transition to Socialist construction. I purposely read over again all that was written, for example in March and April 1918, about the tasks of our revolution in the sphere of Socialist construction, and became convinced that this was really the assumption we made.

This was in the period when the essential task—which politically is of necessity a preliminary task—of seizing power, of creating the Soviet system of state in place of the former bourgeois parliamentary system, and of extricating ourselves from the imperialist war, had been accomplished; and this process of extrication from the war was accompanied by particularly heavy losses and by the signing of the incredibly humiliating Brest Peace, which imposed almost impossible terms. After the conclusion of this peace, the period from March to the summer of 1918 was a period in which the military problems appeared to have been solved. Subsequently events showed that this was not the case, and that in March 1918, after the problem of the imperialist war had been solved, we had only approached the beginning of the civil war, which, in connection with the Czecho-Slovak mutiny in the summer of 1918, began to advance upon us more and more. Then, in March or April 1918, as against methods of gradual transition, we began to discuss, in speaking of our tasks, modes of operation, methods of struggle to be directed mainly towards the expropriation of the expropriators, and this is what mainly characterised the first months of the revolution—the end of 1917 and the beginning of 1918. But already at that time we were obliged to say that our work in organising accounting and control lagged considerably

behind our work and activities in connection with the expropriation of the expropriators. That meant that we had expropriated more than we could take account of, control, manage, etc., and thus the question was raised of shifting from the task of expropriating, of smashing the power of the exploiters and expropriators, to the task of organising accounting and control, to the so to speak prosaic economic tasks of direct construction. And already at that time we had to retreat on a number of points. For example, in March and April 1918 the question was raised of remunerating specialists according to rates corresponding not to Socialist but to bourgeois relationships, i.e., according to rates that did not correspond to the difficulty or the laboriousness of the work, but which corresponded to bourgeois customs and to the conditions of bourgeois society. Such exceptionally high—high from the bourgeois point of view—remuneration to the specialists did not originally enter into the plans of the Soviet government and even ran counter to a number of decrees issued at the end of 1917. But in the beginning of 1918 our Party gave direct instructions to the effect that we must take a step backward in this respect and accept a certain “compromise” (I employ the term that was then in use). By a decision of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee adopted on April 29, 1918, it was deemed necessary to make this change in the general system of payment.

We regarded our construction, our economic work, which we put in the forefront at that time, from a single angle. At that time it was assumed that we could proceed directly to Socialism without a preliminary period in which to adapt the old economy to Socialist economy. We assumed that, having created state production and state distribution, we had entered a different economic system of production and distribution compared with the previous system. We assumed that the two systems—the system of state production and distribution and the system of private trade production and distribution—would compete with each other, and meanwhile we would be building up state production and distribution, and step by step winning it away from the enemy system. We say that our task now is not so much the expropriation of the expropriators as accounting, control, raising the productivity of labour and raising dis-

cipline. We said this in March and April 1918, but we failed to ask what the relation of our economy would be to the market, to trade. When, for example, in the spring of 1918, in our polemics with a number of comrades who were opposed to the signing of the Brest Peace, we raised the question of state capitalism, we did not argue that we were going back to state capitalism, but that our position would be eased and the solution of our Socialist problems would be facilitated if state capitalism became the predominant economic system in Russia. I want to draw your attention to this circumstance particularly, because it is necessary, it seems to me, to bear it in mind in order to understand the change in our economic policy and how this change should be appraised.

I will give you an example which may illustrate more concretely and vividly the conditions in which our struggle has evolved. Recently in Moscow I saw a copy of the privately owned *Advertising Sheet*. After three years of our old economic policy, this *Advertising Sheet* created the impression of something entirely unusual, absolutely novel and strange. From the point of view of the general methods of our economic policy, however, there was nothing strange about it. You must remember, if we take this small but rather characteristic example, how the struggle developed and what its aims and methods in our revolution in general were. One of the first decrees passed at the end of 1917 was that establishing a state monopoly of advertisements. What did that decree imply? It implied that the proletariat, which had won political power, assumed that there would be a more gradual transition to the new social-economic relations—not the abolition of the private press, but subordination of it to a certain amount of state guidance, directing it into the groove of state capitalism. The decree which established the state monopoly of advertisements naturally assumed that privately owned newspapers would continue to exist as a general rule, that an economic policy requiring private advertisements would continue, and that private property would remain—that a number of private establishments which needed advertising and advertisements would continue to exist. This is what the decree on the state monopolisation of private advertisements meant, and it could not have meant anything else. There

is something similar in the decrees on banking, but I will not refer to that in order to avoid making the example too complicated.

What was the fate of the decree establishing the state monopoly of private advertisements that was issued in the first weeks of the existence of the Soviet government? It was soon repealed. Recalling the development of the struggle and the conditions in which it has proceeded since then, it is amusing to think how naive we were at that time, at the end of 1917, to talk about introducing a state monopoly of private advertisements. What sort of private advertisements can there be in a period of desperate struggle? The enemy, *i.e.*, the capitalist world, retaliated to this decree of the Soviet government by continuing the struggle and by raising it to the highest possible tension. The decree assumed that the Soviet government, the proletarian dictatorship, was so firmly established that no other system of economy was possible, that the necessity to submit to it was so obvious to the mass of private entrepreneurs and individual owners that they would accept battle on the ground that we, as the state power, would choose. We said in effect: "We will allow your private publications to continue; private initiative will remain; the freedom to advertise, which is necessary for the service of these private enterprises, will remain, except that the state will impose a tax on advertisements, advertisements will be concentrated in the hands of the state. The private advertisement system, as such, will not be destroyed; on the contrary, you will enjoy certain advantages which always accrue from the proper concentration of publicity." What actually happened, however, was that we had to wage the struggle on quite a different terrain. The enemy, *i.e.*, the capitalist class, retaliated to this decree of the state power by utterly repudiating the whole of that state power. There could be no thought of advertisements, because all that was left of bourgeois capitalism in our system concentrated all its forces on the struggle against the very foundations of the state power. We, who said to the capitalists, "Submit to state regulation, submit to the state power, and instead of the complete abolition of the conditions corresponding to the old interests, habits and views of the population, all this will be gradually changed by state regulation," were confronted with

the question of our very existence. The tactics adopted by the capitalist class were to force us into a desperate and ruthless struggle which compelled us to smash up the old relationships to a far larger extent than we at first intended.

Nothing came of the decree establishing the state monopoly of private advertisements, it remained a scrap of paper, while life, *i.e.*, the resistance of the capitalist class, compelled our state to transfer the struggle to an altogether different plane, not to the petty, ridiculously petty, questions which we were naive enough to bother about at the end of 1917, but to the question "To be or not to be?"—to smash the sabotage of the former salaried class, to repel the army of the White Guards, which was receiving assistance from the bourgeoisie of the whole world.

I think that this episode of the advertisements decree provides useful guidance on the fundamental question of whether the old tactics were wrong or not. Of course, appraising events in the light of subsequent historical development, we cannot but regard our decree as naive, and to a certain extent mistaken. Nevertheless, it contained something that was right, in that the state power—the proletariat—made an attempt to pass to the new social relationships while adapting itself, so to speak, to the conditions then prevailing as much as possible, as gradually as possible, and breaking as little of the old as possible. The enemy, *i.e.*, the bourgeois class, resorted to every device to provoke us into the most extreme manifestation of desperate struggle. Was it strategically correct from the enemy's point of view? Of course it was correct, because how could the bourgeoisie be expected to submit to an absolutely new, hitherto unprecedented proletarian power without first testing its strength by means of a direct assault? The bourgeoisie said to us in effect: "Excuse us, gentlemen, we shall not talk to you about advertisements, but about whether we can find a Wrangel, a Kolchak and a Denikin, and whether they will obtain the aid of the international bourgeoisie in deciding, not the question of whether you are going to have a State Bank or not, but an entirely different question." In regard to the State Bank, as in regard to advertisements, quite a lot was written at the end of 1917, but to a very large degree it remained a scrap of paper.

The bourgeoisie at that time retaliated with a strategy that was quite correct from its point of view. It said in effect: "First of all we will fight over the fundamental question of whether you are the state power, or whether you only think you are; and this question will not be decided by decrees, of course, but by war, by violence, and in all probability this war will be waged not only by us, the capitalists who have been expelled from Russia, but by all those who are interested in the capitalist system. And if it turns out that the rest of the world is sufficiently interested, we Russian capitalists will receive the assistance of the international bourgeoisie." From the point of view of protecting its interests, the bourgeoisie acted quite rightly. If it had even a crumb of hope of settling the fundamental question by the most effective means—war—it could not agree, and should not have agreed, to the partial concessions the Soviet government gave it with a view to making a more gradual transition to the new system. "We don't want your transition, we don't want your new system," was the reply of the bourgeoisie.

That is why events developed as we now see them. On the one hand the victory of the proletarian state accompanied by an unusually great struggle, which characterised the whole period of 1917 and 1918 amidst conditions of unusual popular enthusiasm. On the other hand an attempt to introduce the economic policy of the Soviet government, originally calculated to bring about a number of gradual changes, to bring about a more cautious transition to the new system, which, among other things, found expression in the slight example I just gave you. But instead of that, it got in retaliation from the enemy camp the determination to wage a ruthless struggle to decide whether the Soviet government could retain its position in the system of economic international relations. This question could only be decided by means of war, which, being civil war, was a very fierce one. The more difficult the struggle became, the less it became possible to make a cautious transition. As I have said, in this logic of the struggle the bourgeoisie was right from its own point of view. But what could we say? We said: "You will not frighten us, Messieurs capitalists. We shall give you another thrashing in this field in addition to the thrashing we gave you and your 'Constituent' in the political

field." We could not act otherwise. Any other mode of operation would have meant the complete surrender of our positions.

If you recall the conditions of development of the struggle you will understand the meaning of what then seemed a wrong and fortuitous change—why, relying upon the general enthusiasm and ensured political power, we could easily disperse the Constituent Assembly; why, at the same time, we had to try a number of measures to secure the gradual and cautious transition to economic changes; and why, finally, the logic of the struggle and the resistance of the bourgeoisie compelled us to resort to the most extreme, most desperate and unscrupulous civil war, which devastated Russia for three years.

By the spring of 1921 it became clear that we had suffered defeat in our attempt to adopt the Socialist principles of production and distribution by the tactics of "direct assault," i.e., by the shortest, quickest and most direct route. The political situation in the spring of 1921 revealed to us that retreat to the position of state capitalism, the substitution of "siege" tactics for "direct assault" tactics was inevitable on a number of economic questions.

If this transition calls forth complaints, lamentations, despondency and indignation among some people, we must say: It is not defeat that is dangerous, but fear to admit defeat, fear to draw all conclusions from it. A military struggle is a much simpler thing than the struggle between Socialism and capitalism, and we defeated Kolchak and Co. because we were not afraid of admitting our defeats, we were not afraid to learn the lessons of these defeats, and to do over again what was unfinished or done badly.

We must act in the same way in the much more complicated and difficult sphere of the struggle between Socialist economy and capitalist economy. Do not be afraid of admitting defeat. Learn from defeat. Do over again more thoroughly, more carefully, and more systematically what has been done badly. If we agreed to the point of view that, like the surrender of positions, admission of defeat gives rise to despondency and relaxation of effort in the struggle, we should have to say that revolutionaries who give way to such despondency are not worth a damn.

I hope that except in a few cases, nobody will be able to say

this about the Bolsheviks, who have been hardened by the experience of three years of civil war. Our strength lay and will lie in our ability to take the severest defeats into account in an absolutely sober manner and to learn from the experience of them what must be changed in our activities. That is why we must learn to speak straightforwardly. This is interesting and important, not only from the point of view of theoretical truth, but also from the practical point of view. We cannot learn to solve our problems by new methods today if yesterday's experience has not opened our eyes to the incorrectness of the old methods.

The task of passing to the New Economic Policy lies in that — after the experience of direct Socialist construction amidst unprecedentedly difficult conditions, amidst the conditions of civil war, in which the bourgeoisie imposed fierce forms of struggle upon us—a clear position confronted us in the spring of 1921, *viz.*, not direct Socialist construction, but retreat in a number of spheres of economy to state capitalism; not direct assault, but the very severe, difficult, and unpleasant task of a long siege accompanied by a number of retreats. This is what was necessary in order to approach the solution of the economic problem, *i.e.*, ensuring the economic transition to the principles of Socialism.

I cannot today quote the figures, the data, or the facts showing the results of this policy of reverting to state capitalism. I will quote only one slight example. You know that one of the principal centres of our economy is the Donets Basin. You know that there we have some of the largest of the former capitalist enterprises, which are on the level of the capitalist enterprises of Western Europe. You know also that our task there was first to restore the big industrial enterprises: with a small number of workers it was easier for us to proceed to restore the Donets industry. But what do we see there now, after the change in policy last spring? We see the very opposite, *viz.*, the particularly successful development of production in the small, peasant mines, which we began to lease out. We see the development of the relations of state capitalism. The peasant mines are working well and are delivering to the state, in the form of rent, about thirty per cent of their coal output. The development of production in the Donets Basin shows considerable

general improvement compared with the catastrophic position that prevailed this summer, and in this improvement, the improvement of production in the small mines, their exploitation on the principles of state capitalism, played an important part. I cannot here go into all the data on the question, but this example should clearly illustrate to you some of the practical results that have been achieved by the change in policy. The revival of economic life—and this is what we must have at all costs—increased productivity, which we must also have at all costs. These we are beginning to obtain as a result of the partial reversion to the system of state capitalism. Our ability, the extent to which we shall be able to apply this policy correctly in the future, will determine to what extent we shall continue to get good results.

Now I want to go back and develop my main idea. Has our transition to the New Economic Policy in the spring, our retreat to the ways, means and methods of activity of state capitalism, proved sufficient to enable us to stop the retreat and prepare for the offensive? No, it has not yet proved sufficient. And for this reason. To revert to the example I gave at the beginning (of direct assault and siege in war), we have not yet rearranged the disposition of forces, the redistribution of stores and ammunition, etc.; in short, we have not yet completed the preparations for the new operations which, in accordance with the new strategy and tactics, must be conducted on different lines. If we are now passing through the transition to state capitalism, the question arises: should we strive to prevent the methods of activity which corresponded to the previous economic policy from hindering us now? It goes without saying, and our experience has proved, that we must try to do this. In the spring we said that we shall not be afraid to revert to state capitalism, and we defined our tasks as being that of organising the exchange of commodities. A number of decrees and orders, an enormous number of newspaper articles, the whole of our propaganda and all the laws passed since the spring of 1921 were all directed to the purpose of improving the exchange of commodities. What was implied by that term? What plan of construction, if one may so express it, did that term imply? It implied the more or less Socialistic exchange throughout the country of the products of

industry for the products of agriculture; and by means of this exchange of commodities, the restoration of large-scale industry as the sole basis of Socialist organisation. But what happened? You all know from your own practical experience, and now it is evident from the whole of our press, that the exchange of commodities broke down; it broke down in the sense that it assumed the form of buying and selling. And we must now admit this if we do not want to hide our heads under our wings, if we do not want to be like those who do not realise when they are beaten, if we are not afraid of looking danger straight in the face. We must admit that the retreat has proved to be insufficient, that we must make a further retreat, a further retreat from state capitalism to the creation of state-regulated buying and selling and money circulation. Nothing came of exchange of commodities, the private market proved to be stronger than we and instead of the exchange of commodities we got ordinary buying and selling, trade.

Take the trouble to adapt yourselves to this, otherwise you will be submerged by the element of buying and selling, of money circulation!

That is why we are in the position of those who are still compelled to retreat, in order at length to take up the offensive. That is why the admission that the previous methods of economic policy were wrong should now be general among us. We must know this in order to be able to understand the crux of the present position, the peculiar feature of the transition that now lies ahead of us. We are not now confronted with urgent external tasks; nor are we confronted with urgent military tasks. We are now confronted mainly with economic tasks, and we must remember that the next transition cannot be a direct transition to Socialist construction.

We could not set our affairs (economic) in order in three years. In view of the degree of ruin, impoverishment and cultural backwardness that prevailed in our country, it proved impossible to solve this problem in so short a time. But, taken as a whole, the assault left its mark and had its uses.

Now we find ourselves in the position of having to go back even a little further, not only to state capitalism, but also to the state regulation of trade and the circulation of money. Only in

this way, a longer way than we expected, can we restore economic life. Without the restoration of a proper system of economic relations, the restoration of small-peasant farming, the restoration, and the raising by our own efforts of large-scale industry, we cannot extricate ourselves from the crisis. We have no other way out; and yet the necessity of this economic policy is not yet understood clearly enough in our midst. When we say, for example, that the task that confronts us is to make the state a wholesale merchant, or that it must learn to carry on wholesale trade, that our task is commercial, some people think it is very queer and even very terrible. They seem to say: "If Communists go to the length of saying that the task that comes to the forefront now is that of trading, ordinary, plain, vulgar, paltry trading, what can remain of Communism? Is this not enough to drive anyone into despondency and make him say, 'All is lost'?" I think that if we look around we will see moods of this kind; they are very dangerous, because if they became widespread, they would make things seem distorted in the eyes of many, and would hinder the sober understanding of our immediate tasks. To conceal from ourselves, from the working class, from the masses, that we retreated in the economic sphere in the spring of 1921 and that we are continuing the retreat now, in the autumn and winter of 1921-22, would be our own self-condemnation as lacking in class consciousness; it would be evidence of our inability to look the present situation straight in the face. It would be impossible to work and fight under such conditions.

If any army which had become convinced that it is unable to capture a fortress by direct assault said that it refused to leave the old positions and occupy new ones, refused to adopt new methods of solving its problem, one would say about such an army that if it has learnt to attack but has not learnt to retreat at the dictates of certain severe conditions it will never win the war. Wars which began and ended with an uninterrupted victorious advance have never occurred in world history, or else they have been very rare exceptions. This applies to ordinary wars. But what about wars which decide the fate of a whole class, which decide the question of Socialism or capitalism? Are there reasonable grounds for assuming that a people which is attempting to solve this

problem for the first time can immediately find the only correct and infallible method? What grounds are there for assuming that? None whatever. Experience teaches the very opposite. Not one of the problems that we had to solve could be solved at one stroke; we had to make repeated attempts to solve them. Having suffered defeat, we tried again, did everything all over again, sought for the manner in which to approach the solution of the problem, not an absolutely correct solution, but at least a satisfactory one. That is how we worked, and that is how we must continue to work in the future. If amidst the prospects that are opening up before us there were no unanimity in our ranks, it would be a very sad sign that an extremely dangerous spirit of despondency had lodged itself in the Party. On the other hand, if we are not afraid of speaking the sad and bitter truth straight out, we shall learn, we shall unfailingly and certainly learn, to conquer all and sundry difficulties.

We must stand on the basis of existing capitalist relations. Shall this task frighten us? Or shall we say that this task is not Communistic? That would mean that we had failed to understand the revolutionary struggle, that we had failed to understand the character of this struggle, which is a very intense one and is accompanied by the most abrupt changes, which we cannot wave aside under any circumstances.

I will now sum up.

I will touch upon the question which is engaging everybody's mind. If today, in the autumn and winter of 1921, we are making another retreat, when will the retreat stop? We often hear this question put directly, or not quite directly. But this question recalls to my mind a similar question that was put in the period of the Brest Peace. When we were concluding the Brest Peace we were asked: "If you yield this, that and the other to German imperialism, when will the concessions stop, and what guarantee is there that they will stop? And in making these concessions, are you not making the position more dangerous?" Of course, we are making our position more dangerous: but the fundamental laws of every war must not be forgotten. Spontaneous war is dangerous. There is not a moment in time of war when you are not surrounded by danger. And what is the dictatorship of

the proletariat? It is war, much more cruel, much more prolonged and much more stubborn than any war has ever been. Here danger threatens at every step.

The position which our New Economic Policy has created—the development of small, commercial enterprises, the leasing of state enterprises, etc.—all this is the development of capitalist relations; and to fail to see this means that one has lost one's head entirely. It goes without saying that the growth of capitalist relations is in itself more dangerous. But can you point to a single path in revolution, to any stage and method which did not have its dangers? The disappearance of danger would mean the end of war and the cessation of the dictatorship of the proletariat; but, of course, not a single one among us dreams of anything like that at the present moment. Every step in this New Economic Policy gives rise to a number of dangers. When in the spring we said that we would substitute the food tax for the quotas, that we would pass a decree permitting free trade in the surplus grain left over after the food tax had been paid, we thereby created freedom for the development of capitalism. To fail to understand this would be tantamount to failure to understand fundamental economic relations and to depriving oneself of the opportunity of looking around and acting properly. Of course, the methods of the struggle have changed, the sources of danger have changed. When the problem of the power of the Soviets, the problem of dispersing the Constituent Assembly, was being solved, danger threatened from the side of politics. This danger proved to be insignificant. But when the epoch of civil war set in, civil war supported by the capitalists of the whole world, the military danger, a far more menacing danger, arose. And when we changed our economic policy, the danger became still greater because, consisting as they do of an enormous number of economic, workaday trifles, which one usually becomes accustomed to and fails to notice, economics demand of us special attention and effort, and with special definiteness give rise to the necessity of learning the proper methods of overcoming them. The restoration of capitalism, the development of the bourgeoisie, the development of bourgeois relations in the sphere of trade, etc., is the danger that is peculiar to our present

economic construction, to our present gradual approach to the solution of problems that are far more difficult than previous ones have been. There must not be the slightest misunderstanding about this.

We must understand that the present concrete conditions call for the state regulation of trade and of money circulation, and it is precisely in this sphere that we must show what we are capable of doing. There are more contradictions in our economic activity now than there were before the New Economic Policy: a partial, slight improvement in the economic position of some strata of the population, of a few; complete disproportion between economic resources and the necessary requirements of others, of the majority. Contradictions have increased. And it goes without saying that while we are undergoing this very sharp change it is impossible to escape from these contradictions in one leap.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasise the three main themes of my report. First, the general question: in what sense must we admit that our Party's economic policy in the period preceding the New Economic Policy was wrong? I quoted the example of a certain war to illustrate the necessity of abandoning direct assault tactics for siege tactics, the inevitability of assaults in the beginning, and the necessity of appreciating the significance of new methods of fighting after the failure of the assaults.

Next, the first lesson and the first stage which became defined by the spring of 1921, *viz.*, the development of state capitalism on a new path. In this respect, certain successes can be recorded, but there are still unprecedented contradictions. We have not yet mastered this sphere.

And third, after the retreat from Socialist construction to state capitalism, which we were obliged to make in the spring of 1921, we see that the regulation of trade and of the circulation of money has come up on the order of the day. However remote from Communism the sphere of trade may seem to be, it is precisely in this sphere that a peculiar problem confronts us. Only by solving this problem can we proceed to solve the problem of meeting economic needs, absolutely urgent needs, and only in this way can we secure

the possibility of restoring large-scale industry by a longer but more certain way, and the only way that is now open to us.

These are the main things in the question of the New Economic Policy that we must keep before us. In solving the problems of this policy, we must clearly see the fundamental lines of development in order to keep our bearings in the seeming chaos we now observe in economic relations, when, simultaneously with the breaking up of the old, we see the weak shoots of the new, and not infrequently see methods in our activities which do not correspond to the new conditions. Having set ourselves the task of raising the productive forces and of restoring large-scale industry as the only basis for socialist society, we must act in such a way as will enable us to approach this task properly, and to solve it, come what may.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOLD NOW AND AFTER THE COMPLETE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM

THE best way of celebrating the anniversary of our great revolution would be to concentrate attention upon the unsolved problems of the revolution. It is particularly appropriate and necessary to celebrate the revolution in this way in those cases when the revolution has not yet solved certain fundamental problems, when it is necessary to assimilate something new (from the point of view of what the revolution has done up to now) for the solution of these problems.

The new thing for our revolution at the present time is the necessity of resorting to "reformist," gradualist, cautiously devious methods of operation in solving the fundamental problems of economic construction. This "novelty" gives rise to a number of theoretical and practical questions, perplexities and doubts.

A theoretical question: how is the transition from a number of most revolutionary actions to extremely "reformist" actions in the same field to be explained when the revolution as a whole is victoriously marching forward? Is this not a "surrender of positions," the "admission of defeat," or something like it? Of course, our enemies, from the reactionaries of the semi-feudal type to the Mensheviks, or other knights of the Two-and-a-Half International, say that it is. They would not be enemies if they did not shout something of this sort on every pretext and even without any pretext. The touching unanimity that prevails on this question among all parties, from the feudal reactionaries to the Mensheviks, is only further proof that opposed to the proletarian revolution is the "one reactionary mass" of all these parties (and it may be said in parenthesis, as Engels foresaw in his letters to Bebel of 1875 and 1884).

But there is some "perplexity" even among friends,

Restore large-scale industry and arrange the direct interchange of its products with those of small-peasant farming, and thus assist the socialisation of the latter. For the purpose of restoring large-scale industry, borrow from the peasants a certain quantity of foodstuffs and raw materials by means of the quotas—this was the plan (or method, system) that we carried out for more than three years up to the spring of 1921. This was the revolutionary approach to the problem, the direct and complete breaking up of the old social-economic system and the substitution of a new one for it.

Since the spring of 1921, in place of this approach, plan, method, or system of action, we are adopting (we have not yet "adopted" but are still "adopting," and we have not yet fully appreciated this) a totally different method, a reformist type of method: not to *break up* the old social-economic system, trade, small production, small proprietorship, capitalism, but to *revive* trade, small proprietorship, capitalism, while cautiously and gradually getting the upper hand over it, or creating the possibility of subjecting it to state regulation *only in proportion* as it revives.

This is quite a different approach to the problem.

Compared with the previous revolutionary approach, this is a reformist approach (revolution is a transformation which breaks the foundations and roots of the old and does not remodel it cautiously, slowly, gradually, trying to break as little as possible).

The question arises: if after having tried revolutionary methods you found them a failure and adopted reformist methods, does that not prove that you are declaring the whole revolution to have been a mistake? Does it not prove that the revolution should not have been started at all, that you should have started with and confined yourselves to reforms?

This is the conclusion drawn by the Mensheviks and their like. But this conclusion is either sophistry or simply a fraud perpetrated by hardened politicians, or a sign of infancy on the part of those who have not been hardened in the art of politics. The greatest danger, perhaps the only danger, that confronts a genuine revolutionary is exaggeration of revolutionariness, forgetting the limits and conditions in which revolutionary methods are appro-

priate and can be successfully employed. Genuine revolutionaries have most often broken their necks when they began to write "revolution" with a capital R, to elevate "revolution" to something almost divine, to lose their heads, to lose the ability in the coolest and most sober manner to reflect, weigh up and ascertain at what moment, under what circumstances and in which sphere of action it is necessary to act in a revolutionary manner, and when it is necessary to adopt reformist action. Genuine revolutionaries will perish (not that they will be defeated from outside, but that their internal affairs will collapse) only if—and they certainly will, if they do—they lose their sobriety of outlook and take it into their heads that "the great, victorious, world" revolution can and must solve all problems in a revolutionary manner under all circumstances and in all spheres of action.

Whoever "takes such a thing into his head" must perish, because he invents something stupid in connection with a fundamental problem; and in the midst of fierce war (and revolution is the fiercest sort of war) the penalty for stupidity is defeat.

Why does it follow that "the great, victorious, world" revolution can and must employ only revolutionary methods? It does not follow at all. It is absolutely untrue, as is clear from purely theoretical propositions if we do not depart from Marxism. That it is untrue is proved also by the experience of our revolution. Theoretically: Engels said that stupid things are done in time of revolution as at any other time, and he was right. We must try to do as few stupid things as possible and to rectify those that are done as quickly as possible, taking into account, as soberly as possible, which problems can be solved at any given time by revolutionary methods and which cannot be solved by revolutionary methods. Our own practical experience: the Brest Peace was an example of action that was quite unrevolutionary, was reformist, and even worse than reformist, because it was a retreat, whereas as a general rule reformist action advances, slowly, cautiously, gradually, but does not go back. The correctness of our tactics at the time of signing the Brest Peace is proved so fully, it is so clear to all and generally admitted, that it is not worth talking about any more.

The only complete piece of work of our revolution is the hour-

geois-democratic work; and we can be legitimately proud of it. The proletarian or Socialist part of its work may be summed up in three points: 1) The revolutionary emergence from the imperialist World War; the exposure and *cessation* of the butchery organised by the two world groups of capitalist pirates. This we completed. It can be completed on all sides only by a revolution in a number of advanced countries. 2) The creation of the Soviet system, the form of realisation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The world-historical change has been made. The epoch of bourgeois-democratic parliamentarism has come to a close. A new chapter in world history—the epoch of proletarian dictatorship—has opened. The Soviet system and all forms of proletarian dictatorship will have the finishing touches put to them and be completed only by the joint efforts of a number of countries. We still have a great deal to do in this sphere. It would be unpardonable to lose sight of this. We shall have to put the finishing touches to the work and alter it, to start from the beginning all over again, more than once. Every step we take forward and upward in developing productive forces and culture must be accompanied by the work of perfecting and altering our Soviet system and we are still low in the scale of economy and culture. Much will have to be altered, and to be “embarrassed” by this would be the height of stupidity (if not something worse than stupidity). 3) Economic construction of the foundations of the Socialist system. In this sphere the principal and fundamental has not yet been completed. And this is our surest cause, surest from the point of view of principle, from the practical point of view, from the point of view of the R.S.F.S.R. today and from the international point of view.

Since the principal thing has not yet been completed we must concentrate all our attention upon it. The difficulty here lies in the form of transition.

In my *Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*, written in April 1918, I wrote:

“It is not sufficient to be a revolutionary and an adherent of Socialism or a Communist in general. One must be able at each particular moment to find that special link in the chain which one must grasp with all one’s might in order to hold the whole chain, and to make lasting preparations for the transition to the next link; the order of the links, their form, the manner in

which they are linked together, their difference from each other in the historical chain of events, are not as simple and not as senseless as those in an ordinary chain made by a smith."¹

At the present moment the link in the sphere of activity referred to is the revival of internal *trade* under proper state regulation (direction). Trade—this is the "link" in the historical chain of events, in the transitional forms of our Socialist construction in 1921-22, which we, the proletarian state, we, the leading Communist Party, *must "grasp with all our might."* If we "grasp" this link with sufficient force *now* we shall certainly master the *whole* chain in the very near future. Unless we do that, we shall not master the whole chain, we shall not create the foundation for Socialist social-economic relations.

Communism and trade? That may sound strange. It seems to be something disjointed, incongruous, remote. But if we ponder over it from the point of view of *economics*, we shall find that the one is not more remote from the other than Communism is from small-peasant, patriarchal agriculture.

When we conquer on a world scale I think we shall use gold for the purpose of building public lavatories in the streets of several of the large cities of the world. This would be the most "just" and educational way of utilising gold for the benefit of those generations which have not forgotten how, for the sake of gold, ten million men were killed and thirty million were maimed in the "great war for freedom," in the war of 1914-18. in the war that was waged to decide the great question of which peace was the worst, the Brest Peace or the Versailles Peace, and how, for the sake of this gold, preparations are certainly being made to kill twenty million men and to maim sixty million in a war, say, about 1925, or about 1928, between, say, Japan and America, or between England and America, or something like that.

But however "just," useful or humane it would be to utilise gold for this purpose, we nevertheless say: Let us work for another decade or so with the same intensity and with the same success as we have been working in 1917-21, only on a wider field, in order to reach the stage when we can put gold to this use. Meanwhile, we

¹ *Selected Works*, Vol. VII, p. 347.-Ed.

must save the gold in the R.S.F.S.R., sell it at the highest price, buy goods with it at the lowest price. "When living among wolves, howl like the wolves." As for exterminating all the wolves, as would be done in sensible human society, we shall act up to the wise Russian proverb: "Don't boast when going to war, boast when returning from war."

Trade is the only possible economic link between the scores of millions of small farmers and large-scale industry *if . . . if* there is not alongside these farmers an excellently equipped large-scale machine industry with a network of electric cables, an industry so well equipped technically, and having its organisational "superstructures" and accompanying accessories, as to be able to supply the small farmers with the best products in large quantities, more quickly and cheaper than before. On a world scale this "if" *has already been achieved*. This condition already exists; but a country standing alone and one of the most backward capitalist countries at that, having tried directly and at one stroke to realise, to put into practice, to organise practically, the *new* links between industry and agriculture, failed to achieve this task by "direct assault," and must now try to achieve it by a number of slow, gradual, and cautious "siege" operations.

The proletarian state can master trade, give it direction, put it within certain limits. I will quote a small, a very small example: in the Donets Basin a small, still very small, but undoubted economic revival has started, partly as a result of raising the productivity of labour at the large state mines, and partly as a result of leasing small peasant mines. The proletarian state is thus receiving a small quantity (a miserably small quantity from the point of view of the advanced countries, but an appreciable quantity, in view of our poverty) of extra coal at cost of production, say, 100, and it sells it to state institutions at a price of, say, 120, and to private persons at a price of, say, 140 (I must say in parenthesis that my figures are quite arbitrary, first because I do not know the exact figures, and, secondly, even if I did know them, I would not announce them now). This looks as if we are *beginning*, if only in very modest dimensions, to master *trade* between industry and agriculture, to master wholesale trade, to master

the task of clutching at the available, small, backward industry, or at large-scale but weakened and ruined industry; of reviving trade on the *present* economic basis; of making the average rank-and-file peasant (and this is the peasant who is active among the masses, the representative of the masses, the bearer of anarchy) feel the economic revival; of taking advantage of it for the purpose of more systematically and persistently, more widely and successfully, restoring large-scale industry.

We shall not yield to "sentimental Socialism," or to the old Russian, semi-aristocratic, semi-muzhik, patriarchal mood of supreme contempt for trade. It is permissible to use, and we *must* know how to use, since it is necessary, all economically transitional forms, for the purpose of strengthening the link between the peasantry and the proletariat, for the immediate revival of national economy in a ruined and tormented country, for reviving industry, for facilitating future more extensive and profound measures like electrification.

Marxism alone precisely and correctly defines the relation between reform and revolution. Marx was able to see this relation only from one aspect, namely, in the conditions preceding the first to any extent permanent and prolonged victory of the proletariat, if only in one country. In those conditions, the basis of the proper relation was: reform is the by-product of the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat. In the capitalist world this relation is the foundation of the revolutionary tactics of the proletariat—the A B C, which is distorted and obscured by the venal leaders of the Second International and the half-pedantic and half-mincing knights of the Two-and-a-Half International. After the victory of the proletariat, if only in one country, something new enters into the relation between reform and revolution. In principle, the thing remains as before, but a change in form takes place, which Marx could not foresee, but which can be appreciated only on the basis of the philosophy and politics of Marxism. Why were we able correctly to carry out the Brest retreat? Because we had advanced so far forward that we had room to retreat in. *In a few weeks*, from November 7 (October 25), 1917, to the Brest Peace, we rushed forward, built up the Soviet state, extricated

ourselves from the imperialist war in a revolutionary manner and completed the bourgeois-democratic revolution, at such breakneck speed that *even* the great movement of retreat (the Brest Peace) left us sufficient room in which to take advantage of the "respite" and to march forward victoriously against Kolchak, Denikin, Yudenich, Pilsudski and Wrangel.

Before the victory of the proletariat, reforms are a by-product of the revolutionary class struggle. After the victory (while remaining a "by-product" on an international scale) they are, in addition, for the country in which the victory was achieved, a necessary and legitimate respite in those cases when, after the utmost exertion of effort, it is obvious that sufficient strength is lacking for the revolutionary accomplishment of this or that transition. Victory creates such a "reserve of strength" that it is possible to sustain oneself even in a forced retreat, sustain oneself materially and morally. Sustaining oneself materially means preserving a sufficient superiority of forces to prevent the enemy from inflicting utter defeat. Sustaining oneself morally means not allowing oneself to become demoralised and disorganised, preserving a sober estimation of the situation, preserving vigour and firmness of spirit, even making a long retreat, but within limits, stopping the retreat in time, and returning again to the offensive.

We retreated to state capitalism, but we retreated within limits. We are now retreating to the state regulation of trade; but we shall retreat within limits. We already see signs that the retreat is coming to an end; the prospect of stopping this retreat in the not distant future is dawning. The more conscious, the more unanimous, the more free from prejudice we are in carrying out this necessary retreat, the sooner shall we be able to stop it, and the more durable, speedy and extensive will our victorious advance be later.

November 5, 1921

PART III
THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY
1922-23

THE INTERNATIONAL AND INTERNAL POSITION OF THE SOVIET REPUBLIC

Report Delivered at a Meeting of the Communist Fraction of the All-Russian Congress of the Metal Workers' Union, March 6, 1922

COMRADES, permit me to disturb your usual order of procedure somewhat and to deal today not with the subjects that are on the agenda of your meeting, and of your congress, but with my conclusions and opinions on the principal problems of policy. It has now become the custom to address those who, while not being official representatives of state institutions, actually perform an enormous share of the work of the state. And you all know that really businesslike work is being done in most of our state institutions by representatives of the working class, including, of course, the metal workers, who are in the front ranks.

That is why I think that it will not be inappropriate in the present case to disturb your usual order of procedure and to speak not so much about trade union and Party questions as about political questions, about our international and internal position. I am convinced that there is something in our international and internal position that resembles a change of policy, which calls for the special attention of every Party man and of course of every class conscious worker, in order that he may fully understand the significance of this change of policy, and properly assimilate it and apply it in his Soviet, Party, trade union and every other kind of work.

You all know, of course, comrades, that Genoa continues to stand in the forefront of the problems of our international politics. It is not that I am so firmly convinced that it legitimately continues to stand in the forefront, for when we say "Genoa" we mean the

well-known conference that was to have taken place in Genoa, Italy; the preparations for it had been almost completed, but now, unfortunately, it is in such an indefinite position that nobody knows (and I am afraid that even its initiators and organisers do not know) whether there is much chance of its taking place or not. At all events, we must say to ourselves, and to all those who have any interest in the fate of the workers' and peasants' republic, that our position on this question, that is, on the question of the Genoa Conference, has been firm from the very beginning and remains firm. It is not our fault if somebody lacks, not only firmness, but even the most elementary determination, the most elementary ability to carry out his intention. From the very beginning we declared that *we welcomed Genoa and would attend it*; we understood perfectly well, and did not conceal it, that we were going there as merchants, because trade with capitalist countries is absolutely essential for us (until they have entirely collapsed), and that we were going to Genoa to discuss in the most correct and favourable manner the politically suitable terms of this trade, and nothing more. This is not a secret to those capitalist states the governments of which drew up and circulated the first plan of the Genoa Conference. These states know perfectly well that the list of commercial treaties which bind us with various capitalist countries is becoming longer and longer, that the number of practical commercial agreements we have concluded is increasing, and that the number of joint Russian and foreign commercial projects in the most varied combinations of foreign states and various branches of our industry that are now being discussed in the most detailed manner is enormous. Thus the practical basis of what is to be mainly discussed at Genoa is perfectly well known in the capitalist states. And if in addition to this basis a superstructure of all sorts of political talk, assumptions and plans arises, we must understand that it is only a superstructure, mostly artificially erected, invented and being realised by those who are interested in it.

It goes without saying that during the four years and more that the Soviet government has been in existence we have acquired sufficient practical experience (in addition to the fact that we knew

enough about this theoretically) to enable us properly to appraise the diplomatic game now being played according to all the rules of the obsolete art of bourgeois diplomacy by Messieurs the representatives of the bourgeois states. We know perfectly well what lies at the bottom of this game; we know that in essence it is trade. *The bourgeois countries must trade with Russia*; they know that without some form of economic relations their collapse will proceed further than it has gone up to now. Notwithstanding all their magnificent victories, notwithstanding the endless boasting with which they fill the newspapers and telegrams of the whole world, their economy is falling to pieces. And after four years, after their great victories, they cannot cope with the simplest task, not of building something new, but of restoring the old; and they are still racking their brains over the the question of how to get together and form some combination of three, four, or five (as you see, the number is extraordinarily large and makes it frightfully difficult to reach an agreement), so as to be able to trade. I understand that Communists really need time to learn to trade, and that anyone who wants to learn this business will make the crudest of mistakes for several years; but history will forgive him, because he is entirely new to the business. For this purpose our brains must be more flexible, and we must discard all Communist, or rather Russian, Oblomovism, and very much more. But it is rather strange to hear that representatives of the bourgeois states have to learn the trading business all over again after they have been engaging in it for hundreds of years, and when the whole of their social life is based upon it. Incidentally, it is not so strange to us. We have always said, and have known, that they appraised the imperialist war much less correctly than we did. In appraising it, they could see no further than their noses; and three years after their gigantic victories they cannot find a way out of the situation. We Communists said that we appraised the war more profoundly and correctly, that the effect of its contradictions and its disasters is ever so much wider than the capitalist states believe. And, looking at the bourgeois victor countries as bystanders, we said, "They will recall our forecast and our appraisal of the war and its consequences more than once." We are not surprised by the fact that

they have lost themselves in a wood of, perhaps, less than four pines. But at the same time we say, "We must trade with the capitalist states while they remain such." We shall negotiate with them as merchants, and the fact that we can do so is proved by the increasing number of trade agreements and the number of transactions we have concluded with the capitalist states. We cannot publish these until they are signed. When a capitalist merchant comes to us and says, "This business must remain between ourselves until the negotiations are completed," we, of course, cannot but agree, from the commercial point of view. We, however, know how many agreements are in preparation. The list alone fills several pages, and it includes scores of practical proposals that have been discussed with substantial financial groups. Of course, Messieurs the representatives of the bourgeois states who are gathering at Genoa know this as well as we do; whatever the position may be in regard to other things, contacts between these governments and their capitalist firms have, of course, been maintained. Even among them laxity has not reached such dimensions as to prevent them from knowing this.

That is why, when we constantly read in foreign telegrams about their not knowing exactly what will take place at Genoa, that they are inventing something new, that they want to astonish the world by submitting new terms to Russia, permit me to say to them (and I hope I will have the opportunity of saying this to Lloyd George personally, at Genoa): "You will not surprise anyone with this, gentlemen. You are shrewd businessmen and you trade excellently. We are only just learning to trade, and trade very badly. But we have scores and hundreds of agreements and proposals for agreements which show how we trade, and on what terms we do or will do business." And if in the newspapers we read all sorts of information, published for the purpose of scaring some of us, about their intention of putting us to some sort of test, we can afford to smile quietly at it. We have heard quite enough threats, much more serious than those of the merchant who intends to slam the door after offering his very lowest price. We have heard threats in the shape of the guns of the Allied powers which own almost the whole world. *We were not frightened by*

these threats. Messieurs, European diplomats, please do not forget this. We are not in the least concerned about maintaining our diplomatic prestige, our good name, to which the bourgeois states attach so much importance. Officially, we shall not even talk about it. But we have not forgotten. Not one of our workers, not one of our peasants has forgotten, can forget, or ever will forget that he fought in defence of the workers' and peasants' government against the alliance of all these very powerful states which assisted intervention. We have a whole collection of treaties which these states concluded with Kolchak and Denikin over a number of years. These have been published, we know them, the whole world knows them. What is the use of playing hide-and-seek and pretending that we have all become Simple Simons? Every peasant and every worker knows that he fought against these states and that they failed to conquer him. And if, Messieurs, representatives of the bourgeois states, you care to entertain yourselves and to waste your paper (you have ever so much more than you need) and your ink and to overload your cables and your radio stations in order to announce to the whole world. "We will put Russia to the test," we shall see who comes out best. We have already been put to the test, not the test of words, not the test of trade, not the test of money, but the test of the club; and at the price of severe, bleeding and painful wounds, we have deserved that it should be said of us, not by ourselves but by our enemies, "One man who has been thrashed is worth two who have not."

We deserve this in the military sphere. In regard to the sphere of trade, it is a pity that we Communists are not being thrashed enough: but I hope that this defect will be made good with equal success in the near future.

I said that I hope to discuss these subjects with Lloyd George personally in Genoa, and to tell him that *it is no use trying to frighten us with such nonsense*, because it would only lower the prestige of those who tried to do so. I hope that I will not be prevented from doing this by my illness, which during the last few months has prevented me from taking direct part in political affairs and which totally incapacitates me for the Soviet duties which I have been appointed to perform. I have reason to believe

that I will be able to return to my duties within a few weeks. *But will three or four of them succeed in getting together within the next few weeks and definitely deciding what they have already informed the world they have decided—that they have reached an agreement? I am not sure about that.* I even dare assert that nobody in the world is sure about it. More than that. They themselves are not sure, because when the victorious powers which rule the whole world gathered at Cannes, after they had gathered many times before—the number of the conferences is infinite, and even the European bourgeois press is laughing at them—they could not say definitely what they wanted.

Hence, from the point of view of practical tasks, and not from the point of view of diplomatic leap-frog, Comrade Trotsky defined the position more correctly than anybody. The day after news was received that all the arrangements for Genoa had been made, that complete agreement about Genoa had been reached, but that it was only the instability of one of the bourgeois governments (they seem to have become suspiciously unstable) which made it necessary to postpone the conference temporarily, he issued the following order: "Every Red Army man must thoroughly understand the international situation; we know for certain that there is a definite group among them which wants to try intervention; we shall be on the alert, and every Red Army man must know what the diplomatic game is, and what the force of arms is, which up to now has decided all class conflicts."

Let every Red Army man know what this game is and what the force of arms is, and then we shall see. Much as capitalism has broken down in all capitalist countries, many influential parties may try their hand at this game. And if the governments are so unstable that they cannot convene a meeting in time, who knows who will be in power? We know that there are influential parties and influential persons and business magnates in those countries who want war; we know this perfectly well, and we are sufficiently informed of the real essence of what lies at the basis of economic treaties. We have endured many severe trials, and we know what misfortune and suffering a fresh attempt at war must involve for us; but we say that *we are quite prepared to go through it again.*

Try it, just try it! The conclusion which Comrade Trotsky drew in issuing his definite appeal instead of opinions about the diplomatic game of leap-frog is that we must explain the international situation to every Red Army man again, that the postponement of the Genoa Conference owing to the instability of the Italian Cabinet is a signal of the danger of war. *We shall see to it that every Red Army man understands this.* It will be easy for us to achieve this because there is hardly a family, hardly a Red Army man in Russia who does not know this, not only from newspapers, circulars and orders, but from his own village, where he has seen cripples, families which have gone through this war, where he sees bad harvests, appalling starvation and ruin, hellish poverty, and knows what causes them, although he does not read the Paris publications of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, which attribute all this to the malevolent qualities of the Bolsheviks. Perhaps there is no desire that grips his being so much as the desire to repel (to say the least) those who imposed upon us and supported the war of Kolchak and Denikin. There is no need for us to appoint new agitational propaganda commissions for this purpose. *On the question of the Genoa Conference we must draw a strict distinction between the substance of the matter and the newspaper canards which the bourgeoisie circulates.* They think these canards are frightful bombs, but they do not frighten us, because we have seen so many of them, and sometimes they do not deserve to be treated with even a contemptuous smile. Every attempt to impose terms upon us as if we were vanquished is so utterly silly that it does not deserve a reply. We say to the powers: *"We, as merchants, are establishing relations; we know what you owe us and what we owe you, and we know what your legitimate and even enhanced profit may be.* Many proposals have been made to us, the number of our agreements is growing and will continue to grow, no matter what figure the three or four victor powers may cut. You will lose by postponing the conference, because you are showing your own people that you yourselves do not know what you want and that you are suffering from what is called a weak will, which is due to your failure to understand the economics and politics which we have appraised more pro-

foundly than you." It will soon be ten years since we made this appraisal, and still the ruin and disorder that have set in since then are not clear to the bourgeois states.

We already see clearly the position that has arisen in our country, and we can say with absolute firmness *that we can now stop, and are already stopping, the retreat which we began. Enough!* We see quite clearly, and do not conceal the fact, that the New Economic Policy is a retreat; we took more than we could hold, but such is the logic of the struggle. Those of you who remember what the position was in November (October) 1917, or those of you who were politically immature at that time and afterwards learnt what the position was in 1917, know what a large number of compromise proposals the Bolsheviks made to the bourgeoisie at that time. They said: "Gentlemen, your affairs are collapsing, but we are going to hold on to power. Would you not care to consider how, as the muzhik says, you could settle all this without making a scene?" We know that there were not only scenes, but attempts at rebellion, which the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries instigated and supported. Formerly they said: "We are prepared to surrender power to the Soviets right now." But a few days ago I read in a Paris journal (there is lots of that stuff there) an article by Kerensky in opposition to Chernov. Kerensky wrote:

"Did we cling to power? Even during the period of the Democratic Conference I said that if anyone could be found to form a homogeneous government, power would be transferred to the new government without the slightest shock."

We did not refuse to take power alone. We said that as early as June 1917. We carried this out at the Congress of Soviets in November (October) 1917. The Bolsheviks obtained a majority at that Congress of Soviets. Then Kerensky appealed to the *Junkers*, rushed off to Krásnov and wanted to gather an army to march on Petrograd. We gave them a good thrashing, and now, in an offended voice, they say: "You rude people, usurpers, executioners!" We say in reply: "Blame yourselves, friends! Do not imagine that the Russian peasants and workers have forgotten what you did. In November (October) you challenged us to fight in the most

desperate manner, and in retaliation we used terror and treble terror; *and we shall use more, if necessary, if you try again.*" Not a single worker, not a single peasant has any doubt about this being necessary; apart from panic-stricken intellectuals, no one has any doubt about that.

Amidst conditions of unprecedented economic difficulty we were compelled to wage war against an enemy whose forces were a hundred times superior to ours. It goes without saying that under these circumstances we were obliged to go to greater lengths in regard to extra Communist measures than would otherwise have been necessary. We were obliged to do so. Our enemies thought that they could put an end to us, they thought they could bring us to our knees, not in words, but in deeds. They said: "We shall not agree to any concession." We replied: "If you think that we will not dare to resort to the most extreme Communist measures, you are mistaken." And we did dare, we did it, and we conquered. Now we say that we cannot hold all these positions, that we are retreating, because we have won enough to enable us to hold the necessary positions. All the White Guards, headed by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, are exultant and say: "Aha, you are retreating!" We say: "Exult, you are only patting yourselves on the back." We stand to gain if our enemy pats himself on the back instead of engaging in practical work. Exult, you are only putting us in a more favourable position by deceiving yourselves with illusions. We have won enormous positions, and had we not won these positions in the period from 1917 to 1921, we would not have had any room to retreat geographically, economically and politically. We are holding on to power in alliance with the peasantry, and if you reject the terms that were offered you before the war, you will get worse terms after the war. This is definitely registered in the diplomatic, economic and political history of the period 1917-21, so that we are not boasting in the least. It is a mere statement of fact, merely a reminder for you. Had Messieurs the capitalists accepted the proposals we made to them in November (October) 1917, they would have had five times as much as they have now. You fought

for three years. What have you gained by it? Do you want to go on fighting? We know perfectly well that not all of you want to fight. On the other hand, we know that in view of the desperate starvation, in view of the present state of industry, we cannot hold all the positions we won in the period 1917-21. We have surrendered a number of them. But we can now say *that, so far as making concessions to the capitalists is concerned, the retreat is now at an end*. We have weighed up our forces and the forces of the capitalists. We have made a number of reconnoitring movements in the way of concluding agreements with Russian and foreign capitalists, and we say—and I hope, I am sure, that the Party congress will say the same, officially, in the name of the leading party of Russia: *"We can now stop our economic retreat. Enough! We shall not go back any further; we shall set to work to deploy and group our forces properly."* When I say that we are stopping our economic retreat, I do not want to suggest that I have for a moment forgotten the hellishly difficult conditions in which we find ourselves, nor do I want to calm or console you on that score. The question of the limits of the retreat, and whether we are stopping the retreat or not, is not a question of the difficulties that confront us. We know the difficulties that confront us. We know what famine in a peasant country like Russia is. We know that we have not yet succeeded in eliminating the sufferings caused by famine. We know what a financial crisis is like in a country which is compelled to trade and which is compelled to issue an abundance of paper money such as the world has never seen before. We know of these difficulties, we know how enormous they are. I am not afraid to say that they are boundless. But this does not frighten us in the least. On the contrary, we gain strength from the fact that we openly say to the workers and peasants: "These are the difficulties that confront you; this is the danger that threatens us from the side of the Western powers. Let us set to work and soberly weigh up our tasks." The fact that we are stopping our retreat does not mean that we are not aware of the dangers. We look them straight in the face. We say: "This is where the main danger lies; we must allay the sufferings of starvation. We have not allayed them yet. We have not yet overcome the financial

crisis." Hence, we must not interpret the words about stopping the retreat to mean that we think that we have laid the foundation (of our new economy) and that we can now march forward quite calmly. No, the foundation has not yet been laid. We cannot look calmly to the future yet. We are surrounded by military dangers, about which I have said enough, and by still greater internal dangers, economic dangers within the country consisting of the frightful state of ruin of the peasantry, the starvation, and the dislocation of our finances. These dangers are very great. They call for an enormous exertion of effort on our part. But if we are compelled to fight, we shall be able to do so. It is not easy for them to fight either. It was easy for them to start war in 1918, and as easy to continue it in 1919. But much water, and blood, and many other things, flowed beneath the bridges up to 1922. The Western workers and peasants are not anything like what they were in 1919. And it is impossible to fool them by saying: "We are fighting against the Germans, but the Bolsheviks are nothing more than German agents." We do not become panic-stricken over our economic position. Today we have scores of agreements concluded with Russian and foreign capitalists. We know what difficulties have confronted us in the past and confront us now. We know why the Russian capitalists consented to conclude these agreements. We know on what terms these agreements have been concluded. The majority of these capitalists concluded these agreements as practical men, as merchants. We, too, are acting like merchants. But every merchant takes politics into account to a certain degree. If he is a merchant from a not altogether barbarous country, he will not enter into transactions with a government which shows no signs of stability, of great reliability. The merchant who did such a thing would not be a merchant, but a fool. The overwhelming majority of the merchants are not fools, for the logic of the commercial struggle eliminates the fools from the commercial field. If formerly our appraisal was, "Denikin beat you, now show that you can beat Denikin," today our appraisal is, "If the merchant has beaten you, prove that you can compel him to do business." We have proved it. We have already concluded a number of agreements with very big capitalist firms. Russian

and West European. We know what they are after; they know what we are after.

Today the object of our work has changed somewhat. This is exactly what I wanted to make a few remarks about, to supplement my already somewhat lengthy report.

In consequence of the fact that Genoa is displaying vacillation of which one cannot foresee the end, and the fact that we have made so many concessions in our internal policy, we must say: "*Enough! No more concessions!*" If Messieurs the capitalists think that they can procrastinate, and that the longer they procrastinate the more concessions they will get, then we must say: "*Enough! Tomorrow you will get nothing.*" If they have learnt nothing from the history of the Soviet government and its victories, they can do as they please. We have done all we can and have informed the whole world about it. I hope that the congress will corroborate the fact that we shall not retreat any further. *The retreat has come to an end*, and in consequence of that the nature of our work has changed.

It must be observed that there is still considerable nervousness, almost morbidness, in our ranks when this question is discussed; all sorts of plans are drawn up and all sorts of decisions are adopted. In this connection I want to mention the following. Yesterday I casually read in *Izvestiya* a political poem by Mayakovsky. I am not an admirer of his poetical talent, although I fully admit that I am not a competent judge in this field. But it is a long time since I experienced such pleasure from the point of view of politics and administration. In his poem Mayakovsky pours scorn on meetings and taunts the Communists with continually sitting at meetings. I am not sure about the poetry; but as for the politics, I vouch for their absolute correctness. We are indeed in the position (and it must be said that it is a very absurd position) of those who are continually meeting, setting up commissions, drawing up plans without end. There was a character in Russian life—Oblomov. He was always lolling on his bed and mentally drawing up plans. That was a long time ago. Since then Russia has passed through three revolutions; but the Oblomovs have remained, for there were Oblomovs not only among the landlords but also among the peasants, and not only among the peasants but among the intellec-

tuals, and not only among the intellectuals, but also among the workers and Communists. It is sufficient to watch us at our meetings, at our work on commissions, to be able to say that *the old Oblomov has remained, and it will be necessary to give him a good washing and cleaning, a good rubbing and drubbing to make a man of him.* In this respect we must look upon our position without any illusions. We have not copied any one of those who write the word "revolution" with a capital R, as the Socialist-Revolutionaries do. We could quote the words of Marx to the effect that many foolish things are done during a revolution, more perhaps than at any other time. We revolutionaries must learn to regard these foolish acts soberly and fearlessly. In this revolution we have done so much that is ineradicable, so much that is finally victorious, and about which the whole world knows, that we have no reason whatever to be embarrassed or nervous. Our position now is that, basing ourselves on our reconnaissances, we test what we have done; this testing is very important and should serve as the starting point for our further progress. And since we have to hold out in the struggle against the capitalists, we must resolutely pursue our new path. *We must build up our whole organisation in such a way that there shall be no one at the head of our commercial enterprises who has no experience in this field.* Very often we find at the head of our institutions a Communist, an admittedly conscientious comrade, tried and tested in the struggle for Communism, who has suffered imprisonment for the cause, and for that reason was put at the head of a state trust. But he does not know how to trade. He has all the undoubted qualities of a Communist, but the merchant cheats him, and does it excellently. It is a mistake to put a most worthy, excellent Communist, whose loyalty no one but a madman would doubt, in a place that should be occupied by a smart, conscientious salesman who could cope with his work ever so much better than the most loyal Communist. This is where our Oblomovism makes itself felt. We have put Communists, with all their excellent qualities, on practical work for which they are totally unfitted. How many Communists are there in government institutions? We have huge quantities of material, bulky works, that would cause the heart of the most methodical

German scientist to rejoice; we have mountains of paper, and it would take the History of the Party Commission fifty times fifty years to investigate it all; but if you tried to get anything practical in a state trust, you would fail, and you would never know who was responsible for what. The practical fulfilment of decrees, of which we have more than enough, and which we bake as hastily as Mayakovsky describes, is never checked. Are the decisions of the responsible Communist workers carried out? Can they organise this work? No. They cannot; and that is why the very quintessence of our internal policy is changing. What is the significance of our meetings and commissions? Very often they are a game. After we began to purge our Party and said to ourselves, "Out with the place-hunters, limpets and thieves!" things improved. We have expelled about a hundred thousand; that is excellent, but it is only a beginning. We shall discuss this question thoroughly at the Party congress. And then, I think, the tens of thousands who now only organise commissions, and do not, and cannot, carry on practical work, will meet with the same fate. After we have purged our Party in this way, it will engage in real work and will learn to understand this work as it learnt to understand military work. This, of course, is not a matter of several months, or even of one year. We must display rocklike firmness in this question. We are not afraid to say that the character of our work has changed. Our worst internal enemy is the Communist who occupies a responsible (or not responsible) Soviet post and enjoys universal respect as a conscientious man. "He is not much of a musician, but he never touches a drop." He has not learnt to fight against red tape, he is unable to fight against it, he shields it. *We must rid ourselves of this enemy, and with the aid of all class conscious workers and peasants we shall get at him. The whole mass of non-party workers and peasants will follow the lead of the vanguard of the Communist Party in the fight against this enemy and this inefficiency and Oblomovism. There can be no vacillation whatever on this score.*

In conclusion, I will briefly sum up. The game in Genoa, the game of leap-frog that is going on around it, will not compel us to waver in the least. We cannot be caught now. *We shall go to the*

merchants and agree to do business, continuing our policy of concessions; but the limits of these concessions are already defined. What we have given the merchants in our agreements up to now has been a step backward in our legislation, but we shall not retreat any further.

In connection with this, our main tasks in our internal and particularly our economic policy are undergoing a change. We do not need new decrees, new institutions, or new methods of struggle. *What we need is the testing of the fitness of our workers, the checking of actual fulfilment.* The next purge will affect the Communists who *imagine* that they are administrators. Let all those who conduct all these commissions, conferences and talk, and do no practical work, penetrate deeper into the sphere of propaganda, agitation and other useful work. All sorts of extraordinary and intricate things are invented on the plea that the New Economic Policy requires something new; but they do not do the work they are instructed to do. No effort is made to take care of the kopeks that are put in their charge, no effort is made to make the kopek grow into two kopeks; but they draw up plans affecting billions and even trillions of Soviet rubles. It is against this evil that we are waging our struggle. *To test men and to test actual fulfilment*—this, this again, this alone is now the quintessence of our whole work, of our whole policy. This is not a matter of a few months, or of a year, but of several years. We must say officially, in the name of the Party, what the quintessence of the work is now, and reorganise our ranks accordingly. If we do that we shall be as victorious in this new sphere as we have been up to now in all the spheres of work which the Bolshevik, proletarian power, supported by the masses of the peasantry, has undertaken.

THE NEW CONDITIONS OF PARTY MEMBERSHIP

TWO NOTES TO V. M. MOLOTOV

I

COMRADE MOLOTOV:

I request that the following proposal be brought up at the plenum of the Central Committee.

I consider it extremely important to prolong the probation period for new members of the Party. Zinoviev fixes the probation period at six months for workers and twelve months for others.¹ I propose that six months be allowed only for those workers who have actually been workers in large industrial enterprises for a period of not less than ten years. For all other workers a probation period of eighteen months should be fixed; two years should be fixed for peasants and Red Army men, and three years for others. Special exceptions are to be permitted with the joint consent of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission.

I think it is very dangerous to leave the short periods proposed by Zinoviev. There is no doubt that we constantly regard as workers people who have not had the slightest serious experience of large-scale industry. Very often real petty bourgeois, who accidentally, and for a short time, have become transformed into workers, are regarded as workers. All clever White Guards very definitely take into account the fact that the alleged proletarian character of our Party does not in the least safeguard it against the small-proprietor elements gaining predominance in a very short time. In view of the lackadaisical and unsystematic methods that prevail in our ranks, short periods of probation will in fact mean the complete absence of any serious test of whether the applicants are really

¹ This refers to the theses of Zinoviev's report on "Strengthening the Party," delivered at the Eleventh Party Congress.—*Ed.*

to any extent tried Communists. If we have 300,000 to 400,000 members in the Party, the number is excessive, for absolutely all facts go to show that the level of training of the present members of the Party is inadequate. That is why I strongly insist on the necessity of a longer probation period, and on instructing the Organisation Bureau to draw up and strictly apply rules that will really make the period of probation a serious test and not an empty formality.

I think that this question should be discussed at the congress with special care.

LENIN

March 24, 1922

II

Comrade Molotov:

[Please give this to be read to all the members of the Central Committee before the question of the new conditions of Party membership is brought up at the congress.]

Having read the decision of the plenum of March 25 on the question of the probation periods for new members joining the Party, I should like to challenge this decision at the congress. As, however, I am afraid that I shall not be able to speak at the congress, I request that my opinion be read.

There is no doubt that the bulk of the present membership of our Party is insufficiently proletarian. I do not think anybody can challenge this, and a simple reference to statistics will bear it out. Since the war, the factory workers in Russia have become much less proletarian than they were before, because during the war all those who desired to evade military service went into the factories. This is a universally known fact. On the other hand, it is equally undoubted that, taken as a whole (if we take the level of the overwhelming majority of our members), our Party is less politically trained than is necessary for real proletarian leadership in the present difficult situation, especially in view of the overwhelming preponderance of the peasantry, which is rapidly awakening to independent class politics. Further, it must be borne in mind that the temptation to join the government party at the pres-

ent time is enormous. It is sufficient to recall all the literary productions of the Smenovekhists¹ to become convinced of the sort of people, very remote from everything proletarian, who have now been carried away by the political successes of the Bolsheviks. If the Genoa Conference results in further political successes for us, the efforts of petty-bourgeois elements, and of elements positively hostile to all that is proletarian, to get into the Party will grow to enormous dimensions. Six months' probation period for workers will not diminish this pressure in the least, for there is nothing easier than artificially arranging such a short probation period, the more so that it is not in the least difficult, under present conditions, for very many intellectual and semi-intellectual elements to join the ranks of the workers. From all this I draw the conclusion, which is reinforced in my mind by the fact that the White Guards deliberately take the non-proletarian composition of our Party membership into account—I draw the conclusion that we must fix a much longer probation period, and if we leave the six months' period for workers, we must without fail, in order not to deceive ourselves and others, define the term "worker" in such a way as to include only those who could have acquired a proletarian mentality from their very position in life. This is not possible without having worked in a factory for many years, not for ulterior motives, but because of general conditions of economic and social life.

If we do not close our eyes to reality, we must admit that at the present time the proletarian policy of the Party is not determined by the character of its membership, but by the enormous undivided prestige enjoyed by the thin stratum which may be called the old guard of the Party. Only a very slight internal struggle within this stratum would be sufficient, if not to destroy this prestige, then at all events to weaken it to such an extent that it would lose the power to determine policy.

Hence, it is necessary: 1) to lengthen the probation period for all categories; 2) to define in particular detail how the applicant is to pass the probation period, what should be the concrete

¹ See Lenin's explanation on p. 346.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

and practical conditions for determining whether the probation period is really a period of probation and not a mere formality; 3) to create a qualified majority on the bodies which decide on applications of new members; 4) to make it a condition that the decision to admit new members be endorsed, not only by Gubernia Party Committees, but also by the Gubernia Control Commissions; 5) to devise other measures for the purpose of helping the Party to rid itself of those members who are not in the least Communists consciously carrying out a proletarian policy. I do not propose that a new general purging of the Party be undertaken, because I do not think it is practical at the moment; but I think it is necessary to find some means of actually purging the Party, *i.e.*, of reducing its membership. I am sure that if the necessary thought is given to the matter a number of suitable measures can be devised.

I would ask the members of the Central Committee reading this to reply to me if possible, if only in a short telephone message addressed to one of the secretaries of the Council of People's Commissars.

LENIN

March 26, 1922

POLITICAL REPORT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE TO THE ELEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.)

March 27, 1922

COMRADES, permit me to start the political report of the Central Committee not from the beginning of the year, but from the end. The most topical political question today is Genoa. But as a great deal has already been said about this in our press, and as I have already said what is most material to the subject in my speech on March 6, which was published,¹ I would ask you to permit me not to go into detail on this question, unless you particularly desire me to do so.

You are all familiar with the general question of Genoa, because much space has been devoted to it in the newspapers—in my opinion too much space is devoted to it at the expense of the real, practical and urgent requirements of our work of construction in general, and of our economic construction in particular. In Europe, in all bourgeois countries, of course, they like to engage people's minds, or stuff their heads, with all sorts of trash about Genoa. On this occasion (although not only on this occasion) we are copying them, copying them much too much.

I must say that the Central Committee has taken very careful measures to make up a delegation of our best diplomats (we now have a respectable number of Soviet diplomats, which was not the case at the beginning of the existence of the Soviet Republic). The Central Committee has drawn up sufficiently detailed instructions to our diplomats in Genoa; we spent a long time discussing them and considered and reconsidered them several times. It goes without saying that the question here is, I will not say a military question, because that term is likely to be misunderstood, but at

¹ In this volume, p. 229 *et seq.*—*Ed.*

all events a question of rivalry. In the bourgeois camp there is a very strong trend, much stronger than any other trend, towards disrupting the Genoa Conference. There are other trends which want the Genoa Conference to meet at all costs. These latter trends have now achieved the upper hand. Finally, in all bourgeois countries there are trends which might be called pacifist trends, among which should be included the whole of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. This section of the bourgeois front tries to champion a number of pacifist proposals, and outlines something in the nature of a pacifist policy. About this pacifism we as Communists have definite views which need not be expounded here. Needless to say, we are going to Genoa not as Communists, but as merchants. We must trade, and they must trade. We want the trade to be profitable for us, and they want it to be profitable for themselves. The course of the struggle will be determined, to some degree at least, by the skill of our diplomats.

Of course, although we are going to Genoa as merchants, it is not a matter of indifference to us whether we shall deal with those representatives of the bourgeois camp who are inclining towards a military solution of the problem, or with the representatives of the bourgeois camp who are inclining towards pacifism, even of the worst kind that could not stand the slightest criticism from the point of view of Communism. He would be a bad merchant who was not able to appreciate this distinction, and, by shaping his tactics accordingly, did not achieve practical objects.

We are going to Genoa with the practical object of expanding trade and of creating conditions under which it could successfully develop on the widest scale. But we cannot guarantee the success of the Genoa Conference. It would be ridiculous and absurd to give any guarantees for that. I must say that, weighing up the present possibilities of Genoa in the most sober and cautious manner, I think that it will not be an exaggeration to say that we shall achieve our object.

Through Genoa, if our interlocutors there are sufficiently shrewd and not too stubborn; round Genoa if they take it into their heads to be stubborn. But we shall achieve our object!

The most urgent, pressing and practical interests of all the

capitalist states that have sharply revealed themselves during the past few years call for the development, regulation and expansion of trade with Russia. Since such interests exist, we may argue, we may quarrel, we may divide up in various combinations—it is highly probable that we shall have to divide up—nevertheless, after all is said and done, this fundamental economic necessity will hew a road for itself. I think we can rest assured on that score. I cannot vouch for the date, I cannot vouch for success, but at this gathering we can say with a fair amount of certainty that the development of proper trade relations between the Soviet Republic and all the capitalist countries in the world will continue. When I come to it in another part of my report I shall mention the hitches that may possibly occur, but I think that this is all that need be said on the question of Genoa.

Needless to say, the comrades who desire to study the question in greater detail, and who are not satisfied with the list of delegates published in the newspapers, may elect a commission, or a section, and peruse all the material of the Central Committee; and all the correspondence and instructions. Of course, the details we have outlined are provisional, for no one up to now knows exactly who will sit round the table at Genoa, and what conditions, or preliminary conditions or reservations will be announced. It would be highly inexpedient, and I think practically impossible, to discuss all this here. I repeat, the congress, through the medium of a section, or a commission, has every opportunity of collecting all the documents on this question—both the published documents and those in the possession of the Central Committee.

I shall not say any more, as I am sure that it is not this question that is our greatest difficulty. This is not the question on which the whole Party must concentrate its attention. The European bourgeois press is artificially and deliberately exaggerating the importance of this conference in order to deceive the masses of the toilers (as nine-tenths of the bourgeois press in all these free democratic countries and republics always does). We have yielded to the influence of this press to some extent. As always, our press still yields to the old bourgeois customs, it refuses to adopt new, Socialist methods, and we have made more noise than the

subject deserves. In essence, for Communists, especially for those who have lived through such stern years as we have lived through since 1917 and who have witnessed the serious political combinations that were formed in this period, Genoa is not a great difficulty. I cannot recall any disagreement, or controversy, on this question on our Central Committee, or even in the ranks of the Party. This is natural, for there is nothing controversial about this from the point of view of the Communists, even bearing in mind the various shades of opinion among them. We are going to Genoa, I repeat, as merchants, for the purpose of securing the most favourable forms of developing the trade which has started, which is being carried on, and which, even if someone succeeded in forcibly interrupting it for a time, will inevitably continue to develop.

Hence, confining myself to these brief remarks about Genoa, I will now pass to those questions which, in my opinion, have been the principal political questions in the past year, and which will be the principal political questions in the coming year. I think (at least, that is what I am accustomed to) that in a political report of the Central Committee we should not merely speak about what took place during the year under review, but also about the main, fundamental, political lessons of the events of the year, so that we may correctly determine our policy for the coming year, so that we may learn something for the coming year.

The principal question, of course, is the New Economic Policy. The predominating question during the year under review was the New Economic Policy. If we have any important, serious and ineradicable gain to record this year (and I am not quite so sure that we have), it is that we have learnt something of the principles of this New Economic Policy. Indeed, during the past year, we have learnt a great deal in the sphere of the New Economic Policy. And the test of whether we have really learnt anything, and to what extent we have learnt, will probably be made by subsequent events of a kind which we ourselves can do little to determine, as for example the impending financial crisis. I think that the most important thing that we must keep in mind in connection with the New Economic Policy, as a basis for all our arguments, as a means of testing our experience during the past year and of learning

practical lessons for the coming year, are the following three points.

First, the New Economic Policy is important for us primarily as a means for testing whether we are really establishing a link with peasant economy. In the preceding epoch of development of our revolution, when all our attention and all our efforts were mainly directed towards or almost absorbed in resisting invasion, we could not devote the necessary attention to this link, we had other things to think about. When we were confronted by the absolutely urgent and overshadowing task of warding off the danger of being immediately strangled by the gigantic forces of world imperialism, we could afford to and to a certain extent had to ignore this link.

The turn towards the New Economic Policy was decided on at the last congress with extraordinary unanimity, with even greater unanimity than other questions in our Party (which, it must be admitted, is generally distinguished for its unanimity) have been decided. This unanimity showed that the need for a new approach to Socialist economics had fully matured. People who differed on many questions, and who appraised the situation from different points of view, unanimously and very quickly, without any wavering, agreed that we lacked a real approach to Socialist economy, to building its foundation, and that the only way of finding this approach was the New Economic Policy. As a consequence of the development of military events, as a consequence of the development of political events, as a consequence of the development of capitalism in the old cultured West, and as a consequence of the social and political conditions that developed in the colonies, we were the first to make a breach in the old bourgeois world at a time when our country was economically one of the most backward countries, if not the most backward country in the world. The enormous majority of the peasants in our country are engaged in small, individual farming. Work on those points of our programme of Communist socialisation that we could proceed with immediately went on to a certain extent outside of what was being done by the broad peasant masses, upon whom we imposed very heavy obligations on the plea that war did not permit of any hesitation in this

respect. And, taken as a whole, this plea was accepted by the peasantry, notwithstanding the inevitable mistakes that we committed. On the whole, the masses of the peasantry realised and understood that the enormous burdens that were imposed upon them were necessary in order to save the workers' and peasants' government from the landlords, in order to prevent ourselves from being strangled by capitalist invasion, which threatened to rob us of all the gains of the revolution. But there was no link between peasant economy and the economy that was being built up in the nationalised, socialised factories, works and state farms.

We saw this clearly at the last Party congress. We saw it so clearly that there was no wavering whatever in the Party about whether the New Economic Policy was inevitable or not.

It is amusing to read the appraisal of our decision given in the unusually extensive press of the various Russian parties abroad. There are only trifling differences in the various appraisals. Living in the past, they continue to argue that the Left Communists are still opposed to the New Economic Policy. In 1921 they remembered what had occurred in 1918, and what our Left Communists themselves have forgotten; and they go on chewing the cud over and over again, assuring the world that these Bolsheviks are a sly and false lot, and that they are concealing from Europe the fact that there are disagreements in their ranks. Reading this, one says to oneself, "Let them go on fooling themselves." If this is the way they depict to themselves what is going on in our country, we can judge the degree of intelligence of these allegedly highly educated old fogies who have escaped abroad. We know that there have been no disagreements in our ranks, because the practical necessity of a different approach to the building of the foundation of socialist economy was clear to all.

The link with peasant economy, with the new economy which we tried to create, was lacking. Does it exist now? Not yet. We are only just approaching it. The whole significance of the New Economic Policy, which our press is still often searching for everywhere except where they can find it, the whole purpose of this policy is to find the link with the new economy which we are

creating with such enormous effort. That is what stands to our credit; without it we would not be Communist revolutionaries.

We began to build the new economy in an entirely new way and thrust aside the old. Had we not begun to build it, we would have been utterly defeated in the very first months, in the very first years. But this does not mean that, having begun to build it with such boundless audacity, we must obstinately continue in the same way under all and any circumstances. Why does it follow that we should? It does not follow at all.

From the very beginning we said that we have to undertake an entirely new task, and that unless we received speedy assistance from our comrades, the workers in the capitalistically more developed countries, we would encounter incredible difficulties and undoubtedly commit a number of mistakes. The main thing is to be able to see in a sober manner where such mistakes have been made and to begin again from the beginning. If we have to begin from the beginning, not twice, but many times, it will show that we have no prejudices, and that we are approaching the greatest task in the world with a sober outlook.

The main thing in the question of the New Economic Policy at the present moment is to assimilate properly the experience of the past year. This must be done, and we want to do it. And if we want to achieve this, come what may (and we do want to achieve it, and shall achieve it!), we must know that the problem of the New Economic Policy, the fundamental and decisive problem, beside which all else is subsidiary, is to establish a link between the new economy, which we have begun to build (very badly, very awkwardly, but we have begun to build for all that, on the basis of an entirely new, Socialist economy, of new production, of new distribution), and peasant economy, by which millions and millions of peasants obtain their livelihood.

This link has been lacking, and it is this link that we must create before everything else. Everything else must be subordinated to this. We still have to ascertain to what extent the New Economic Policy has succeeded in creating this link and not destroying what we have begun so awkwardly to build,

We are building our economy in conjunction with the peasantry. We shall have to alter it many times and build it in such a way that it will serve as a link between our Socialist work on large-scale industry and agriculture and the work on which every peasant is engaged, in the best way he can, struggling out of poverty, without philosophising (for how can philosophising help him to extricate himself from his position and save himself from the positive danger of a painful death from starvation?).

We must display this link so that we may see it clearly, so that all the people may see it, so that the whole mass of the peasantry may see that there is a connection between their present severe, incredibly ruined, incredibly impoverished, painful existence and the work which is being done for the sake of remote Socialist ideals. We must make it clear to the simple rank-and-file toiler that he has obtained some improvement, and obtained it not in the way a few peasants obtained improvements under the rule of landlordism and capitalism, when every improvement (undoubtedly there were improvements and very important ones) was accompanied by insult, derision and mockery for the muzhik, by violence against the masses, which not a single peasant has forgotten, and which will not be forgotten in Russia for decades. Our aim is to restore the link, to prove to the peasant by deeds that we are beginning with what is intelligible, familiar and immediately accessible to him in spite of his poverty, and not with something remote and fantastic from the peasant's point of view; we must prove that we are able to help him, and that in this period, when the small peasant is in a state of appalling ruin, impoverishment and starvation, the Communists are really helping him. Either we prove that or he will send us to the devil. This is absolutely inevitable.

This is the significance of the New Economic Policy, this is the basis of the whole of our policy, this is the principal lesson taught by the whole of the past year's experience in applying the New Economic Policy, and our, so to speak, main political rule for the coming year. The peasant is allowing us credit, and, of course, he cannot but do so after what he has lived through. Taken in the mass, the peasants go on living and say: "Well, if you are

not yet able to do it, we will wait, perhaps you will learn." But this credit cannot be inexhaustible.

This we must understand, and having obtained credit we must hurry. We must know that the time is approaching when the peasant country will no longer give us any credit, when it will demand cash, to use a commercial term. It will say: "But now, after so many months and so many years of postponement of payment, you, our dear rulers, must have acquired some certain and reliable method of helping us to extricate ourselves from poverty, want, starvation and ruin. You can do things, you have proved it." This is the examination that we shall inevitably have to face, and in the last resort, this examination will decide everything: the fate of the N.E.P., and the fate of Communist rule in Russia.

Shall we be able to complete our immediate task or not? Is this N.E.P. fit for anything or not? If the retreat turns out to be correct, we must link up with the peasant masses while in retreat, and together with them march forward a hundred times more slowly, but more firmly and undeviatingly, so that they may always see that we are really marching forward. Then our cause will be absolutely invincible, and no power on earth can vanquish us. We have not yet achieved this in the first year. We must say this quite frankly. And I am profoundly convinced (and our New Economic Policy enables us to draw this conclusion quite clearly and firmly) that if we appreciate the enormous danger that is concealed in the N.E.P. and concentrate all our forces on the weak points, we shall solve this problem.

Link up with the peasant masses, with the rank-and-file toiling peasants, and begin to move forward immeasurably, infinitely more slowly than we dreamed, but so that the whole mass will actually move forward with us. If we do that we shall in time get an acceleration of this movement such as we cannot dream of now. This, in my opinion, is the first fundamental political lesson of the New Economic Policy.

The second, more specific lesson, is the testing of the competition between state and capitalist enterprises. We are now forming mixed companies (I will say something about them later on), which, like the whole of our state trade and the whole of our

New Economic Policy, is the application by us Communists of commercial methods, of capitalist methods. They are also important because practical competition is created between capitalist methods and our methods. Compare them in a practical way. Up to now we have been writing programmes and making promises. At one time this was absolutely necessary. It is impossible to start a world revolution without a programme and promises. If the White Guards, including the Mensheviks, abuse us for this, it only shows that the Mensheviks and the Socialists of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals totally fail to understand how the development of revolution proceeds. We could not proceed in any other way.

Now, however, the position is that we must test our work; we must put it to a serious test and not the sort of test that is made by control institutions set up by the Communists themselves, even though these control institutions are magnificent, and even though they are almost ideal control institutions in the Soviet and Party systems. It is not this kind of test that we require, but a test from the point of view of mass economy.

The capitalist was able to supply things. He did it badly, he did it exorbitantly, he insulted and robbed us. The simple workers and peasants who do not argue about Communism because they do not know what sort of thing it is know this.

"But the capitalist was able to supply things—are you? You are not able to do so." This is what we heard last spring, not always clearly, but it served as the subsoil of the whole of the crisis last spring. They said: "You are excellent people; but you cannot perform the economic work you have undertaken to do." This is the simple and withering criticism which the peasantry, and through the peasantry a number of strata of workers, directed against the Communist Party last year. That is why this point on the question of the N.E.P., this old point, acquires such significance.

A real test is necessary. The capitalist is operating by your side. He is operating like a robber, he makes profit, but he is skilful. But you—you are trying to do it in a new way: you do not make profit; your Communist principles, your ideals are excellent, they are written out so beautifully that you deserve to be living saints

in heaven—but can you do business? We want a test, a real test, not the kind the Central Control Commission makes when it censures somebody and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee imposes some penalty. No, we want a real test from the point of view of national economy.

The Communists have been given any number of postponements, and more credit has been allowed them than any other government has ever received. Of course, the Communists helped to get rid of the capitalists and landlords. The peasants prize this and gave them an extension of time on credit, but only for a certain period. . . . After that comes the test: can you do business as well as the others? The old capitalist can; you cannot.

This is the first lesson, the first main part of the political report of the Central Committee. We cannot do business. This has been proved in the past year. I should very much like to quote the example of several state trusts (to express oneself in that excellent Russian language that Turgenev praised so highly)¹ and prove to you that we can do business. . . .

Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, and largely owing to sickness, I could not elaborate this part of the report, and I must confine myself to expressing my conviction, which is based on the observation of what is going on. During the past year we showed quite clearly that we cannot do business. This is the fundamental lesson. Either we prove the opposite in the coming year, or the Soviet government will be unable to exist. And the greatest danger is that not everybody realises this. If all Communists, responsible workers, clearly realised that we lack the ability, that we must learn from the very beginning, and that if we do that, the game is ours—that, in my opinion, would be the fundamental conclusion to be drawn. But this is not realised, and some of us are sure that if anyone thinks that way it must be the ignorant people who have not studied Communism and who, perhaps, will learn and understand some day. No, excuse me, the point is not that the peasant or

¹ Turgenev often expressed irony over the clumsy language used in official documents in his day. Lenin here expresses irony over the clumsy abbreviations used in the Soviet press, such as, in this case, "*gostrest*" instead of *gosudarstvenni trest* for "state trust."—Ed. Eng. ed.

the non-party worker has not studied Communism, but that the time for developing a programme and calling upon the people to carry out this programme has passed. That time has passed. Today you must prove that you can give practical, economic assistance to the worker and the muzhik in the present difficult conditions, so that they may see that you have stood the test of competition.

The mixed companies that we have begun to form, which consist of private capitalists, Russian and foreign, and Communists, are one of the forms in which we can learn to organise competition properly and show that we are not less able to establish a bond with peasant economy than the capitalists, that we can meet its requirements, that we can help it to make progress just as it is now, in spite of all its backwardness, for we cannot transform it in a brief space of time.

This is the sort of competition that confronts us as an absolutely urgent task. This is the crux of the New Economic Policy, and in my opinion the whole essence of the Party's policy. We are faced with any number of purely political problems and difficulties. You know what they are: Genoa, the danger of intervention. The difficulties are enormous, but they are insignificant compared with this one. In the other sphere we know how things are done, we have learnt a great deal, we have experienced bourgeois diplomacy. It is the sort of thing the Mensheviks taught us for fifteen years, and we got something useful out of it. This is not new.

But there is something we must now do in economics; we must withstand the competition of the simple shop assistant, of the simple capitalist, of the merchant, who will go to the peasant without arguing about Communism. Just imagine, he will not begin to argue about Communism, but will argue in this way: "Since it is necessary to supply things, to trade properly, to be able to build, I will build at a high price, and the Communists will perhaps build at a higher price, perhaps ten times higher." This is the kind of agitation that is now the essence of the matter, herein lies the root of economics.

I repeat, we received a postponement of payment and credit from the people thanks to our correct policy, and this, to express it in N.E.P. language, is a promissory note. But this promissory

note is undated, and it is impossible to know from the text of the document when it will be presented for payment. Herein lies the danger, this is the specific feature which distinguishes these political promissory notes from ordinary, commercial promissory notes. We must concentrate all our attention on this, and not rest content with having responsible and good Communists in all the state trusts and mixed companies. That is of no use, because these Communists do not know how to trade and are worse than ordinary capitalist salesmen who have received their training in big factories and big firms. We do not admit this; in this respect Communist vanity—to use the same great Russian language again—still exists.¹ The whole point is that the responsible Communist, even one of the best, who is obviously honest and loyal, who has suffered penal servitude and has not feared death, cannot trade, because he is not a businessman, has not learnt to trade, does not want to learn and does not understand that he must start from the A B C. He, the Communist, the revolutionary who has made the greatest revolution in the world, on whom the eyes of, if not forty pyramids, then at all events forty European countries, are turned in the hope of emancipation from capitalism—he must learn from an ordinary salesman who has had ten years' warehouse experience and knows the business, whereas he, the responsible Communist and loyal revolutionary, not only does not know the business, but does not realise that he does not know it.

And so comrades, if we abolish at least this elementary ignorance we shall achieve an enormous victory. We must leave this congress with the conviction that we did not know this and with the determination to start learning it from the A B C. After all, we have not ceased to be revolutionaries (although many say, not altogether without foundation, that we have become bureaucratised) and can understand the simple thing that one must be able to start from the beginning several times in a new and unusually difficult matter: if, having started, you find yourselves at a dead end, start again, and go on doing it ten times if necessary, until you achieve your object. Do not put on airs, do not be conceited

¹ The word in the original is "*Komchvanstvo*," literally: "Comvanity."
—Ed. Eng. ed.

because you are a Communist, for any non-party salesman, perhaps a White Guard—we can be quite sure he is a White Guard—can do business which economically must be done at all costs, whereas you cannot do it. If you, the responsible Communist, who have rank and hundreds of Communist and Soviet titles and “Chevaliers,” understand this, you will achieve your object, because this thing can be learnt.

We have a few tiny successes to record during the past year, but they are insignificant. The main thing is that there is not the widespread realisation and conviction shared by all Communists that at the present time the Russian responsible and most loyal Communist is less able to do this work than any old salesman. I repeat, we must start learning from the very beginning. If we realise this we shall pass our examination; and the examination which the impending financial crisis—which the Russian and international market to which we are subordinated, with which we are connected, and from which we cannot isolate ourselves—will put us to, will be a very severe one; for here we may be beaten economically and politically.

This is the only way the question stands; for the competition will be very severe, and this competition is decisive. We had many moves and escapes from our political and economic difficulties. We can proudly boast that up to now we have been able to utilise these moves and escapes in various combinations corresponding to the varying circumstances. But now we have no other way of escape. Permit me to say this to you, without exaggeration, because in this respect it is really “the last fight we must face,” not against international capitalism—against it we shall have many “last fights to face” yet—but against Russian capitalism, against the capitalism that is growing out of small-peasant economy, the capitalism which is fostered by the latter. Here a fight is impending in the near future, the date of which cannot be definitely fixed. Here the “last fight” is impending; here there are no political or any other détours that we can make, because this is an examination in competition with private capital. Either we pass this examination in competition with private capital, or we suffer utter defeat. To help us pass this examination we have political power and a host of econ-

omic and other resources; we have all we want, except ability. We lack ability. And if we learn the simple lesson of the experience of last year and take it as our guiding line for the whole of 1922, we shall also conquer this difficulty, in spite of the fact that it is greater than the previous difficulty, for it rests with ourselves. It is not like some external enemy. The difficulty lies in the fact that we ourselves refuse to admit the unpleasant truth that is forced upon us, refuse to put ourselves in the unpleasant position that we must put ourselves in, *viz.*, to start learning from the beginning. This, in my opinion, is the second lesson that we must learn from the New Economic Policy.

The third, supplementary, lesson, is on the question of state capitalism. It is a pity that Comrade Bukharin is not present at the congress. I should have liked to argue with him a little, but that had better be postponed to the next congress. On the question of state capitalism, I think that our press, and our Party generally, is making the mistake of dropping into intellectualism, into liberalism, philosophising about how state capitalism is to be interpreted, and turning to old books. But you will not find what we are discussing in those old books. Those books deal with the state capitalism that exists under capitalism. Not a single book has been written about the state capitalism that exists under Communism. It did not even occur to Marx to write a word about this subject; and he died without leaving a single precise quotation or irrefutable instruction on it. That is why we must get out of the difficulty entirely by our own efforts. And if we take what our press says about state capitalism at a single glance, as I tried to do when preparing for this report, we shall become convinced that it is missing the mark, that it is looking in an entirely wrong direction.

The state capitalism that is discussed in all economic literature is the state capitalism which exists under the capitalist system, when the state takes direct control of certain capitalist enterprises. Our state is a proletarian state, it rests on the proletariat, it gives the proletariat all political privileges, and through the medium of the proletariat it attracts to itself the lower ranks of the peasantry (you remember that we started this work with the Committees of Poor Peasants). That is why very many people are misled by state

capitalism. In order to prevent this we must remember the fundamental thing, *viz.*, that state capitalism in the form that we have it here is not dealt with in any theory, or in any literature, for the simple reason that all the usual concepts connected with this term are associated with the bourgeois state in capitalist society. Our society is one which has left the rails of capitalism, but has not yet got on to new rails. The state in this society is guided, not by the bourgeoisie, but by the proletariat. We refuse to understand that when we say "state" we mean ourselves, the proletariat, the vanguard of the working class. State capitalism is capitalism which we shall be able to restrict, the limits of which we shall be able to fix. This state capitalism is connected with the state, and the state is the workers, it is the advanced section of the workers, it is the vanguard, it is ourselves.

State capitalism is the capitalism which we must put within certain limits, and which we have not yet been able to put within those limits. That is the whole point. And yet it is we who must determine what this state capitalism is to be. We have enough, quite enough political power; we also have enough economic resources at our disposal; but the vanguard of the working class which has been brought to the front lacks sufficient ability to lead, to determine the boundaries, to separate itself, to subordinate others to itself and not be subordinated. All that is required is ability, and this is what is lacking.

A situation in which the proletariat, the revolutionary vanguard, possesses sufficient political power, with state capitalism existing alongside it, is absolutely unprecedented in history. The crux of the question lies in our understanding that this is the capitalism which we can and must permit, which we can and must put within certain limits; for this capitalism is necessary for the broad masses of the peasantry and for private capital, which must trade in such a way as to satisfy the needs of the peasantry. Things must be arranged in such a way as to enable the ordinary operation of capitalist economy and capitalist turnover to proceed, because this is necessary for the people and without it existence is impossible. For them, for this camp, all the rest is not absolutely essential; they can become reconciled to all the rest. Will you Communists, you

workers, you, the intelligent section of the proletariat which undertook to administer the state, will you be able to arrange it so that the state, which you took into your hands, shall work in your way? Well, we have lived through a year, the state is in our hands; but has it operated the New Economic Policy in our way during the past year? No. But we refuse to admit this. It did not operate in our way. How did it operate? The machine refused to obey the hand that guided it. It was like an automobile that is going, not in the direction of the man who is driving it, but in the direction desired by someone else, as if it were being driven by some secret, illegal hand, God knows whose, perhaps that of a profiteer, or of a private capitalist, or of both. Be that as it may, the car is not going in the direction the man at the wheel imagines. This is the main thing that must be remembered in regard to state capitalism. In this main sphere we must start learning from the very beginning, and only when we have thoroughly understood and appreciated this can we guarantee that we shall learn this.

Now I come to the question of stopping the retreat which I dealt with in the speech I delivered at the congress of the Metal Workers' Union. Up to now I have not heard, in the Party press, in private letters from comrades, or on the Central Committee, any objection to what I then said. The Central Committee approved my plan, which was, that in the report of the Central Committee to the present congress strong emphasis be laid on the cessation of this retreat and that the congress give obligatory instructions in the name of the whole Party accordingly. We retreated for a whole year. We must now say in the name of the Party, "Enough!" The purpose which the retreat pursued has been achieved. This period is drawing, or has drawn, to a close. Now another object comes to the front—the regrouping of forces. We have arrived at a new place; on the whole we have carried out the retreat in fairly good order. It is true that voices were heard from various sides which tried to convert this retreat into a rout. Some—for example several representatives of the group which bore the name of "Workers' Opposition" (I think they had no right to that name)—argued that we did not retreat properly in some section or other. Owing to their excessive zeal they wanted to pass through one door, and found

themselves passing through another, and now they have realised it. At that time they did not realise that their activities did not help us to correct our movements, but merely had the effect of spreading panic and hindering the effort to carry out our retreat in a disciplined manner.

A retreat is a difficult matter, especially for revolutionaries who are accustomed to advance, especially when they have been accustomed to advance with enormous success for several years, especially if they are surrounded by revolutionaries in other countries who are yearning for the time when they can start the offensive. Seeing that we were retreating, several of them, in a disgraceful and childish manner, shed tears, as was the case at the last Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. Moved by the best Communist sentiments and Communist strivings, several of the comrades burst into tears because, just imagine, the good Russian Communists were retreating. Perhaps it is now difficult for me to understand West European psychology, although I spent quite enough years in those beautiful democratic countries as a political exile. Perhaps it is so difficult for them to understand this that they shed tears over it. We, at any rate, have no time for sentiment. It was clear to us that precisely because we had advanced so successfully for many years and had achieved so many extraordinary victories (and all this in a country that was in an appalling state of ruin and lacked material prerequisites!) it was absolutely necessary for us to retreat in order to consolidate our advance, since we had captured so much. We could not hold all the positions we had captured in the onrush. On the other hand, only the fact that we had captured so much in the onrush, on the crest of the wave of enthusiasm of the workers and peasants, gave us so much room that we could retreat very far, and can retreat far now, without losing the main positions. Taken on the whole, the retreat was carried out in fairly good order, although panic-stricken voices, among them that of the Workers' Opposition (this was the tremendous harm it did!), caused some of our units to be cut off, caused deterioration of discipline, of the proper order of retreat. The most dangerous thing during a retreat is panic. When a whole army (I speak in the figurative sense) is

in retreat, the mood cannot be the same as when it is advancing. At every step you find a mood of depression prevailing to some extent. We have even had poets who wrote that there was cold and starvation in Moscow. "Everything before was bright and beautiful, but now trade and profiteering abound." We have had quite a number of poetic effusions of this sort.

Of course, all this is generated by the retreat. This is where the serious danger lies; it is awfully difficult to retreat after a great victorious advance; the relations are entirely different. In the latter case, even if discipline is not maintained, everybody rushes forward on his own accord. In the case of a retreat, however, discipline must be more conscious and is a hundred times more necessary, because, when the whole army is in retreat, it does not see clearly where to stop. It sees only retreat, and a few panic-stricken voices are enough to cause everybody to run. The danger here is enormous. When a real army is in retreat, machine-guns are placed in the rear, and when an orderly retreat degenerates into a disorderly one, the order is given, "Fire!" and quite right.

If, during an incredibly difficult retreat, when everything depends on preserving good order, anyone spreads panic—even from the best of motives—the slightest violation of discipline must be punished severely, sternly, ruthlessly; and this applies not only to certain of our internal Party affairs, but also, and to a greater extent, to such persons as the Mensheviks, and to all the gentlemen of the Two-and-a-Half International.

The other day I read an article by Comrade Rakosi in No. 20 of the *Communist International* on a new book by Otto Bauer (who was our teacher at one time, but who, like Kautsky, became a miserable philistine after the war). Bauer now writes:

"They are now retreating to capitalism; we have always said that the revolution is a bourgeois revolution."

And the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, all of whom preach this sort of thing, are astonished when we say that we shall shoot those who say such things. They are amazed, but surely it is clear: when an army is in retreat, a hundred times more discipline is required than when the army is advancing, because during an

advance everybody rushes forward. If everybody started rushing back now, immediate disaster would be inevitable.

Precisely at such a time, the most important thing is to retreat in good order, to fix the precise limits of the retreat, and not to give way to panic. And when the Menshevik says, "You are now retreating; I was always in favour of retreat. I agree with you. I am your man. let us retreat together," we say in reply, "For the public advocacy of Menshevism our revolutionary courts must pass sentence of death, otherwise they are not our courts, but God knows what."

They cannot understand this and exclaim, "What dictatorial manners these people have!" They still think that we are persecuting the Mensheviks because they fought us at Geneva. But had we listened to what they said we would not have been able to hold power for two months. Indeed, the sermons which Otto Bauer, the leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries preach express their very natures: "The revolution has gone too far; we have always said what you are saying now; permit us to say it again." And we say in reply: "Permit us to put you against the wall for saying that. Either be good enough to refrain from expressing your views, or, if you want to express your political views publicly in the present circumstances, when we are in a more difficult situation than when we were being directly invaded by the White Guards, then excuse us, we shall treat you as the worst and most pernicious White Guard elements." We must never forget this.

When I say that we are stopping the retreat I do not mean to say that we have learnt to trade. On the contrary, I am of the opposite opinion, and if my speech were to create that impression it would show that I had been misunderstood and that I am unable to express my thoughts properly.

The point, however, is that we must put a stop to the nervousness and fussiness that have arisen as a consequence of the N.E.P., the desire to do everything anew and to adapt everything. We now have a number of mixed companies. True, we have only very few. We have formed nine companies in conjunction with foreign capitalists, which have been endorsed by the Commissariat for

Foreign Trade. The Sokolnikov Commission has endorsed six more and the Severoless¹ has endorsed two. Thus we have seventeen companies with a combined capital amounting to many millions, endorsed by several departments (of course, there is plenty of confusion with all these departments, and this may cause some hitch). At all events, we have formed companies jointly with Russian and foreign capitalists. There are only a few of them. But this small but practical start shows that the Communists have been judged by what they do in practice. They have not been judged by such high institutions as the Central Control Commission and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. The Central Control Commission is a very good institution, of course, and we shall now give it more power. For all that, when these institutions appraise Communists—just think of it, their authority is not recognised on the international market. But when ordinary Russian and foreign capitalists join the Communists in forming companies, we say: "We can do something after all; bad as it is, miserable as it is, we have got something for a start." True, it is not very much. Just think of it: a year has passed since we declared that we would devote all our energy (and it is said that we have a great deal of energy) to this matter, and in the course of a year we have only managed to form seventeen companies.

This shows how hellishly clumsy and awkward we are, how much Oblomovism still remains, which we shall inevitably be thrashed for yet. For all that, I repeat, a start has been made, a reconnaissance has been made. The capitalists would not have come to us had not the elementary conditions for their operations existed. Even if only an insignificant section of them has come, it shows that a partial victory has been achieved.

Of course, they will cheat us in these companies, cheat us so that it will take years before matters are straightened out. But this is nothing. I do not say that this is a victory, it is a reconnaissance which shows that we have territory, we have a piece of land, and can now stop the retreat.

The reconnaissance has revealed an insignificant number of agreements with capitalists, but we have concluded them for all

¹ The Northern Lumber Trust.— *Ed. Eng. ed.*

that. We must learn from that and continue our operations. In this sense we must put a stop to nervousness, screaming and fussiness. We receive notes and telephone messages one after another asking: "May we be reorganised too because we have the N.E.P.?" Everybody is hustling and we get utter confusion; nobody is doing any practical work; everybody is continuously arguing about how to adapt oneself to the N.E.P., but no practical results are forthcoming.

The merchants are laughing at the Communists and in all probability are saying: "Formerly they had Persuaders-in-Chief, now they have Talkers-in-Chief." There is not the slightest doubt that the capitalists gloated over the fact that we were late, that we were not sharp enough. In this sense, I say, these instructions must be endorsed in the name of the congress.

The retreat is at an end. The principal methods of operation, of how we are to work with the capitalists, are indicated. We have examples, although in insignificant number.

Stop philosophising and arguing about the N.E.P.; let the poets write verses, that is what they are poets for. But you economists, stop arguing about the N.E.P. and increase the number of companies; count up the number of Communists we have who can organise competition with the capitalists.

The retreat is at an end; it is now a matter of regrouping our forces. These are the instructions that the congress must pass in order to put an end to fuss and bustle. Calm down, do not philosophise, that will be counted as a black mark against you. Show by your practical work that you are working as well as the capitalists. The capitalists are creating an economic link with the peasants in order to amass wealth; you must create a link with peasant economy in order to strengthen the economic power of our proletarian state. You have the advantage over the capitalists in that political power is in your hands, you have a number of economic implements at your command; the only thing is that you cannot make proper use of them. Look at things more soberly. Throw off the tinsel, the festive, Communist garments; sit down, simply to learn a simple matter. If you do that we shall beat the private capitalist. We possess political power; we possess huge economic resources. If we

beat capitalism and create a link with peasant economy we shall become an absolutely invincible power. Then the building of Socialism will not be the task of the drop in the ocean that is called the Communist Party, but that of the masses of the toilers. Then the rank-and-file peasant will see that we are helping him and will follow our lead, so that, even if the pace is a hundred times slower, it will be a million times more certain.

It is in this sense that we must say that the retreat has come to an end, and it will be the proper thing to transform this slogan, in one form or another, into a decision of the congress.

In this connection, I should like to deal with the question of whether the New Economic Policy of the Bolsheviks is evolution or tactics. That is the question that was put by the Smenovekhists, who, as you know, are a trend which arose in émigré Russia, a social-political trend led by some of the most prominent Constitutional-Democrats, several ministers in the ex-Kolchak government, people who have become convinced that the Soviet government is building up the Russian state and therefore should be supported. They argue in the following way: "But what sort of state is the Soviet government building? The Communists say they are building a Communist state and assure us that this is tactics: the Bolsheviks say that they are using the private capitalists in a difficult moment, but later they will come into their own. The Bolsheviks can say what they like; as a matter of fact it is not tactics but evolution, internal regeneration; they will arrive at the ordinary bourgeois state and we must support them. History proceeds in devious ways."

Several of them pretend to be Communists, but many of them, including Ustryalov, are more straightforward. I think he was a minister in Kolchak's government. He does not agree with his fellow Smenovekhists and says: "You can say what you like about Communism, but I assert that it is not tactics, but evolution." I think that by being straightforward like this, Ustryalov is doing us a lot of good. We, and I particularly, because of my position, hear a lot of sentimental, Communist lies, "communlies," every day, and sometimes we get mortally sick of them. But now instead of these "communlies" I get a copy of *Smena Vekh*, which says quite

straightforwardly: "Things are not in the least what you imagine them to be. As a matter of fact you are slipping into the ordinary bourgeois marsh with Communist flags sticking all over the place with catchwords inscribed on them." This is very useful, for this is not a repetition of what we are constantly hearing around us, but the simple class truth of the class enemy. It is very useful to read this sort of thing, which is written not because the Communist state allows you to write some things and does not allow you to write others, but because it really is the class truth, bluntly and frankly uttered by the class enemy. "I am in favour of supporting the Soviet government," says Ustryalov, although he is a Constitutional-Democrat, a bourgeois, and supported intervention; "I am in favour of supporting the Soviet government because it has taken the road that will lead it to the ordinary bourgeois state."

This is very useful, and in my opinion we ought to bear it in mind. It is much better for us when the Smenovekhists write in that strain than when some of them pretend to be almost Communists, so that from a distance one cannot see whether they believe in God or in the Communist revolution. It must be said that such frank enemies are useful. It must be said quite frankly that the things Ustryalov talks about are possible. History knows all sorts of metamorphoses. To rely on firmness of convictions, loyalty, and other excellent spiritual qualities, is not being serious in politics. A small number of people may possess excellent spiritual qualities, but the issues of history are decided by huge masses, which, if the small number of people do not suit them, sometimes treat the small number none too politely.

Many examples of this have occurred, and that is why we must welcome this frank utterance of the Smenovekhists. The enemy is speaking the class truth and is pointing to the danger that is confronting us. The enemy is striving to make this inevitable. The Smenovekhists express the mood of tens of thousands of bourgeois, or of Soviet employees, the participants in our New Economic Policy. This is the real and main danger. And that is why attention must be concentrated mainly on the question "Who will win?" I have spoken about competition. There is no direct rush

upon us; we are not being taken by the throat. We do not know what will happen tomorrow, but today no armed attack is being made against us. Nevertheless, the fight against capitalist society has become a hundred times more fierce and dangerous, because we are not always able to see clearly who are our enemies and who are our friends.

I did not speak about Communist competition from the point of view of Communist sympathies, but from the point of view of the development of the forms of economy and of social systems. This is not competition but, if not the last, then nearly the last, desperate, furious, life-and-death struggle between capitalism and Communism.

And here we must clearly put the question: wherein lies our strength, and what do we lack? We have quite enough political power. I hardly think there is anyone here who will assert that on such-and-such a practical question, in such-and-such a business institution, the Communists, the Communist Party, lack sufficient power. The main economic power is in our hands. All the decisive large enterprises, the railways, etc., are in our hands. Widely as it may be developed in some places, the leasing of enterprises plays an insignificant role; on the whole its share is insignificant. The economic power in the hands of the proletarian state of Russia is quite adequate to ensure the transition to Communism. What then is lacking? That is clear; what is lacking is culture among that stratum of the Communists who perform the work of administration. But if we take Moscow, with its 4,700 responsible Communists, and if we take that huge bureaucratic machine, that huge pile, we must ask: Who is leading whom? I doubt very much whether it could be said that the Communists were guiding this pile. To tell the truth, it is not they who are leading, they are being led. Here something happened like what we were told in our history lessons when we were children: sometimes one nation conquers another, the nation that conquered is the conqueror and the nation that is vanquished is the conquered nation. This is simple and intelligible to all. But what becomes of the culture of these nations? Here things are not so simple. If the conquering nation is more cultured than the vanquished nation, the former imposes its cul-

ture upon the latter; but if the opposite is the case, the vanquished nation imposes its culture upon the conqueror. Has something like this happened in the capital of the R.S.F.S.R.? And have the 4,700 Communists (nearly a whole army division, and all of them the very best) become subjected to an alien culture? It is true that one may get the impression that, in this case, the vanquished enjoy a high level of culture. But this is not the case at all. Their culture is on a miserably low and insignificant level. Nevertheless, it is higher than ours. Miserable and meagre as it is, it is higher than that of our responsible Communist administrators, for the latter lack the ability to administer. Communists who are put at the head of institutions—and sometimes artful saboteurs deliberately put them in these positions in order to use them as a shield—are often fooled. This is a very unpleasant admission to make, or at all events, not a very pleasant one, but I think we must admit it, for now this is the crux of the question. I think that this is what the political lesson of the past year amounts to, and it is around this that the struggle will rage in 1922.

Will the responsible Communists of the R.S.F.S.R. and of the R.C.P. realise that they cannot administer, that they imagine they are leading, but that, as a matter of fact, they are being led? If they realise this, they will learn, of course, because it can be learnt. For this it is necessary to learn; but our people are not learning. Our people fling orders and decrees right and left, but the result is quite different from what they wanted.

The competition and rivalry that we have placed on the order of the day by proclaiming the N.E.P. is serious competition. It would seem to be going on in all state institutions, but as a matter of fact it is one of the forms of the struggle between two irreconcilably hostile classes. It is another form of the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, it is a struggle that has not yet been consummated, and culturally it has not yet been consummated even in the central institutions in Moscow. Very often the bourgeois officials know the business better than our best Communists, who possess all power and every opportunity, but who cannot make the slightest use of their rights and their power.

I should like to quote a passage from a pamphlet by Alexander

Todorsky. This pamphlet was published in Vesyegonsk (there is an uyezd town of that name in the Tver Gubernia) on the first anniversary of the Soviet Revolution in Russia, on November 7, 1918, a long long time ago. Evidently this Vesyegonsk comrade is a member of the Party. I read the pamphlet a long time ago, and I am not sure that I can quote it verbatim, but he relates how he began to equip two Soviet factories and that for this purpose he enlisted the services of two bourgeois in the way this was done at that time, *i.e.*, he threatened to imprison them and to confiscate their property. They were enlisted for the task of restoring the factories. We know how the services of the bourgeoisie were enlisted in 1918, so there is no need for me to go into details. We do this differently now. But this is the conclusion he arrived at: "This is something only half-done. It is not enough to defeat the bourgeoisie, to finish them off; they must be compelled to work for us."

Now these are remarkable words, remarkable words which show that even in the town of Vesyegonsk, even in 1918, there were some who properly understood the relation between the conquering proletariat and the vanquished bourgeoisie.

It is something only half-done when we whack the exploiters over the hands, render them harmless, and finish them off. In Moscow, ninety out of a hundred responsible workers imagine that the whole point is to finish off, to render harmless, and to whack over the hands. Very often, what I have said about the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and White Guards is taken to mean only to render harmless, to whack over the hands (and perhaps, not only over the hands, but some other place) and to finish off. But that is only half the job. It was only half the job in 1918, when this was said by the Vesyegonsk comrade; now it is even less than one-fourth. We must so arrange matters as to compel their hands to work for us, and not so that responsible Communards shall be at the head, shall have rank and title, and swim with the stream, with the bourgeoisie. That is the whole point.

The idea of building Communist society exclusively with the hands of the Communists is childish, absolutely childish. The

Communists are drops in the ocean, drops in the ocean of the people. They will be able to lead the people along their road only if they correctly determine the road not only in the sense of the world-historical direction. In that sense we have determined our road quite correctly; every state corroborates the fact that we have determined it correctly, and we must determine it correctly in our own native land, in our country. This is not the only thing that determines it, however; it is also determined by whether there will be intervention or not, by our ability to give the peasants goods for their grain. The peasants will say, "You are fine fellows, you defended our native land, that is why we obeyed you; but if you cannot do business, get out!" Yes, that is what the peasants will say.

We shall be able to manage economy if the Communists succeed in building up this economy with others' hands, while they themselves learn from this bourgeoisie and direct it along the road they want it to go. But when a Communist imagines that he knows everything, when he says, "I am a responsible Communist, I have beaten enemies far more serious than any salesman, we have fought at the front and have beaten far more serious enemies," it is a predominating mood like this that is killing us.

Rendering the exploiter harmless, whacking him over the hands, finishing him off, is the least important part of the work. This must be done, and our State Political Administration and our courts must do this more vigorously than they have been doing it up to now; they must remember that they are proletarian courts surrounded by enemies from all over the world. This is not difficult, and in the main we have learnt to do it. Here a certain amount of pressure must be brought to bear, but that is easy.

The second part of the victory, i.e., building Communism with hands other than those of the Communists, being able to do in a practical manner what it is economically necessary to do, means finding the link with peasant economy, satisfying the peasant, so that he shall say: "Hard and difficult as things are, painful as starvation is, I see a government which, while an unusual one, is doing something practical, real and palpably useful." We must see to it that the numerous elements with whom we are co-operating, and who far exceed us in number, shall work in such

a way that we shall be able to supervise them, so that we shall understand this work, and so that their hands shall make something useful for Communism. This is the crux of the present situation; for although individual Communists have understood and realised the necessity of enlisting the non-party people for this work, the broad masses of our Party have not. How many circulars have been written, how much has been said about this? But how much has been done during the past year? Nothing. Of a hundred committees in our Party hardly five can show practical results. This shows how much we lag behind the requirements of the present time, how much we are still living in the traditions of 1918 and 1919. Those were great years; a great world-historical task was accomplished. But if, looking back on those years, we did not see the task that now confronts us, we would be certainly and absolutely doomed. And the whole point is that we refuse to admit this.

I should now like to quote two practical examples to show how we administer. I have said already that it would be more correct to take one of the state trusts as an example. I must ask you to excuse me for not being able to take this correct example, for, in order to be able to do that, it would be necessary to study the concrete material concerning at least one state trust. Unfortunately I have been unable to do that, and so I will take these two small examples. One example is the accusation of bureaucracy levelled against the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade by the Moscow Consumers' Co-operative Society. The other example I take from the Donets Basin.

The first example is not quite suitable—I am not able to find a better—but it will serve to illustrate my main idea. As you know from the newspapers, I have not been able to deal with affairs directly during the past few months; I have not been attending the Council of People's Commissars or the Central Committee. During my temporary and rare visits to Moscow I was struck by the desperate and awful complaints levelled against the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade. I have never doubted for a moment that the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade works badly and that it is bound by red tape. But when the complaints became particularly bitter I tried to investigate the matter, to take

a concrete example and get to the bottom of it, to ascertain the cause, to ascertain why the machine was not working.

The Moscow Consumers' Co-operative Society desired to purchase a quantity of canned goods. In this connection a French citizen appeared on the scene. I do not know whether this was in the interests of international politics and with the knowledge of the leaders of the Entente, or with the approval of Poincaré and the other enemies of the Soviet government (I think our historians will investigate and reveal this after the Genoa Conference), but the fact is that the French bourgeoisie took not only a theoretical, but also a practical part in this business, as a representative of the French bourgeoisie happened to be in Moscow and had canned goods to sell. Moscow is starving, in the summer it will starve still more, no meat has been delivered, and, knowing the merits of our Commissariat for Railways, probably none will be delivered.

An offer is made to sell canned meat (the future investigation will show whether it had gone entirely bad) for Soviet currency. What could be simpler? It turns out, however, that if the matter is properly argued on Soviet lines it is not so simple. I was unable to investigate the matter personally, but I ordered an investigation, and I have before me the report which relates how this celebrated case developed. It started with the decision adopted on February 11 by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.C.P. on the report of Comrade Kamenev on the desirability of purchasing foodstuffs abroad. Of course, how could a Russian citizen decide such a question without the consent of the Political Bureau of the C.C. of the R.C.P.! Just imagine, how could 4,700 responsible workers (and this is only according to the census) decide such a question as purchasing foodstuffs abroad without the consent of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee? This would be something supernatural, of course. Evidently Comrade Kamenev understands our policy and the realities of our position perfectly well, and therefore he did not place too much reliance on a large number of responsible workers. He started by taking the bull by the horns—if not the bull, at all events the Political Bureau—and without any difficulty (I did not hear that there was any discussion over

the matter) obtained a resolution stating: "To call the attention of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade to the desirability of importing foodstuffs from abroad, the import duties. . ." etc. The attention of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade is drawn to this. Things begin to move. This was on February 11. I recall that I had occasion to be in Moscow at the very end of February, or about that time, and what did I find? The complaints, the desperate complaints of the Moscow comrades. "What's the matter?" I ask. "We can't purchase these foodstuffs, no matter what we do." "Why?" "Because of the red tape of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade." I had not been taking part in affairs for a long time and I did not know that the Political Bureau had adopted a decision on the matter; I merely ordered the secretary of our Council to investigate, to procure a document and to show it to me. And the matter ended when Krassin arrived. Kamenev discussed the matter with him, the business was arranged, and the canned meat was purchased. All's well that ends well.

I have not the least doubt that Kamenev and Krassin can come to an understanding and properly determine the political line desired by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.C.P. If the political line on commercial matters were decided by Kamenev and Krassin, our Soviet Republic would be the best republic in the world. But Kamenev, a member of the Political Bureau, and Krassin—the latter is busy with diplomatic affairs connected with Genoa, affairs which have entailed an enormous, an excessive amount of labour—these comrades cannot be dragged into every transaction, dragged into the business of buying canned goods from a French citizen. It is impossible to work in this way. This is not new, not economic, and not a policy, but sheer mockery. Now I have the report of the investigation of this matter. In fact, I have two reports: one, the report of the investigation made by Gorbunov, the Secretary of the Council of People's Commissars, and his assistant, Miroshnikov, and the other, the report of the investigation made by the State Political Administration. I do not know why the latter interested itself in the matter, and I am not quite sure whether it was proper for it to do so, but I will not go into that now, because I am afraid this might entail another inves-

tigation. The important thing is that material on the matter has been collected and I now have it before me.

How could it happen that I should hear bitter complaints at the end of February when I arrived in Moscow that "we cannot buy the canned goods," while at the same time there was a ship loaded with canned goods in Libau and prepared to take Soviet currency for real canned goods?! If these canned goods are not entirely bad (and I now emphasise the "if," because I am not sure that I shall not call for another investigation, the results of which, however, we shall have to report at the next congress), if, I say, these goods have not gone bad and they have been purchased, I ask: Why could not this matter have been settled without Kamenev and Krassin? From the report which I have before me I gather that one responsible Communist sent another responsible Communist to hell. I also gather from this report that one responsible Communist said to another responsible Communist: "In future I shall not talk to you except in the presence of a notary." Reading this report I recalled the time when I was in exile in Siberia, twenty-five years ago, and had occasion to act in the capacity of a lawyer. I was an underground lawyer, because, being summarily exiled, I was not allowed to practice; but as there were no other lawyers in the region people came to me and told me about some of their affairs. But I had the greatest difficulty in understanding what it was all about. A woman would come to me and of course would start telling me all about her relatives, and it was incredibly difficult to get from her what she really wanted. Then she would tell me a story about a white cow. I say to her: "Bring me a copy." She would then go off complaining: "He won't hear what I have to say about the white cow unless I bring a copy." We in our colony used to have a good laugh over this copy. But I was able to make some progress. People came to me, brought copies of the necessary documents and I was able to gather what their trouble was, what they complained of, what ailed them. This was twenty-five years ago, in Siberia, in a place many hundreds of versts from the nearest railway station.

But why was it necessary, three years after the revolution, in the capital of the Soviet Republic, to have two investigations, the intervention of Kamenev and Krassin and the instructions of the

Political Bureau in order to purchase canned goods? What was lacking? Political power? No. They found the money, so that they had economic as well as political power. All the necessary institutions were available. What was lacking, then? Culture on the part of ninety-nine out of every hundred of the workers in the Moscow Consumers' Co-operative Society—to whom I have no objection whatever, and whom I regard as excellent Communists—and in the Commissariat for Foreign Trade. They were unable to approach the subject in a cultured manner.

When I first heard of the matter I sent the following written proposal to the Central Committee: that all the workers in the Moscow institutions, except the members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, who, as you know, are inviolable, be put in the worst prison in Moscow for six hours and those of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade for thirty-six hours. It transpires now that no one can say who the culprits are; indeed, from what I have told you it is evident that the culprits will not be discovered. It is simply the usual Russian intellectual inability to do practical things—inefficiency and lackadaisicalness. First they bustle around, do something, and then think about it, and when nothing comes of it they run to complain to Kamenev and want the matter to be brought up at the Political Bureau. Of course, all difficult state problems should be brought before the Political Bureau—I shall have to say something about that later on—but they should think first and then act. If you want to bring up a case, submit the appropriate documents. First send a telegram; we still have telephones in Moscow, send a telephone message to the competent institution and a copy to Tsurupa saying, "I regard the transaction as urgent and will take proceedings against any red tape." One must think of this elementary culture, one must approach a subject in a thoughtful manner. If the business is not settled in the course of a few minutes' telephone conversation, collect the documents and say, "If you start any of your red tape I shall put you in prison." But not a moment's thought is given to the matter, there is no preparation, the usual bustle, several commissions, everybody is tired out, exhausted, sick, and things begin to move only when Kamenev is put in touch with Krassin. All this is typical, not only in the capi-

tal, Moscow, but also in the other capitals, in the capitals of all the independent republics and separate oblasts. And the same thing, even a hundred times worse, constantly goes on in the provincial towns.

In our struggle we must remember that the Communists must be thoughtful. They can tell you all about the revolutionary struggle and about the state of the revolutionary struggle all over the world. But in order to extricate oneself from desperate poverty and want one must be thoughtful, cultured and methodical; they lack these qualities. It would be unfair to say that the responsible Communists do not approach their tasks in a conscientious manner. The overwhelming majority of them, ninety-nine per cent, are not only conscientious; they proved their loyalty to the revolution under the most difficult conditions before the fall of tsarism and after the revolution; they literally risked their lives. Therefore it would be radically wrong to seek for the cause in this. We need a cultured approach to the simplest affairs of state. It must be understood that this is a matter of state, of commerce, and if obstacles arise one must be able to overcome them and take proceedings against those who are guilty of red tape. I think the proletarian courts will be able to punish, but in order to punish, the culprits must be found. I assure you that in this case no culprits will be found. Look into this business, all of you; no one is guilty, all we see is a lot of fuss and bustle and nonsense. . . . Nobody has the ability to approach the business properly; nobody understands that affairs of state must be approached not this way, but that way. And all the White Guards and saboteurs take advantage of this. At one time we waged a furious struggle against the saboteurs, that struggle confronts us even now. It is true, of course, that there are saboteurs, and they must be fought. But can we fight them when the position is as I have described it? This is worse than any sabotage. The saboteur would want nothing more than that two Communists should argue over the question of when to appeal to the Political Bureau for instructions on the principle of buying foodstuffs; and of course, he would soon slip in between them. If any intelligent saboteur were to stand near one or the other of these Communists, or near each of them in turn, and support him, that would be the end. The cause

would be doomed forever. Who is to blame? Nobody, because two responsible, loyal revolutionaries are arguing about last year's snow, are arguing over the question of when to appeal to the Political Bureau for instructions on the principle of buying foodstuffs.

This is the problem and the difficulty that confront us. Any salesman who has received any training in a large capitalist enterprise could settle a matter like that; but ninety-nine responsible Communists out of a hundred cannot do it, and they refuse to understand that they cannot, and that they must learn from the A B C. Unless we understand this, unless we sit down in the preparatory class again, we shall never be able to solve the economic problem that now lies at the basis of the whole of our policy.

The other example I wanted to give you is that of the Donets Basin. You know that this is the centre, the real basis of the whole of our economy. There can be no thought of restoring large-scale industry in Russia, no thought of real construction of Socialism—for it can only be built with the aid of large-scale industry—unless we restore the Donets Basin and raise it to the proper level. We have seen to this on the Central Committee.

In connection with this region there was no illegal, ridiculous and stupid raising of minor questions in the Political Bureau, but real, absolutely urgent business.

The Central Committee had to see to it that work was carried on in such real centres, bases and foundations of our entire economy in a real businesslike manner; and at the head of the Central Coal Industry Board there were not only loyal people, but really educated and very able people; I would not be mistaken even if I said talented people, and that is why the Central Committee concentrated its attention on it. The Ukraine is an independent republic. That is quite all right. But in Party matters it sometimes—what is the politest way of saying it?—takes a roundabout course, and we have to get at them somehow. For the people there are sly, and—I will not say deceive the Central Committee, but somehow edge away from us. In order to obtain a view of the whole business, we discussed it on the Central Committee here and discovered friction and disagreements. There is a Commission for the Utilisation of Small Mines there, and of course there is severe friction between it and the

Central Coal Industry Board. Still, we, the Central Committee, have a certain amount of experience, and we unanimously decided not to remove the leading people, and ordered that we be kept informed of any friction, even down to the smallest detail. For if we have not only loyal but also capable people in the region, we must strive to support them so that they may complete their tuition, assuming that they have not done that. In the end, a Party congress was held in the Ukraine—I do not know what came of it, all sorts of things happened. I asked for information from the Ukrainian comrades, and I asked Comrade Orjonikidze, as did also the Central Committee, to go down there and ascertain what had taken place. Evidently there was some intrigue and an awful mess, which the History of the Party Commission will not be able to clear up for ten years if it undertakes to do so. But the upshot of it all was that, in spite of the unanimous instructions of the Central Committee, this group was superseded by another group. What was the matter? In the main, notwithstanding all its high qualities, a section of this group committed a mistake. They were overzealous in their methods of administration. There you have to deal with workers. Very often “workers” is taken to mean the factory proletariat. But it does not mean that at all. Since the war people have gone into the factories who are not proletarian at all: they went into the factories in order to hide from the war. And are the social and economic conditions in our country today such as to induce real proletarians to go into the factories? No. It would be true according to Marx; but Marx did not write about Russia, but about capitalism as a whole, beginning with the fifteenth century. It holds true for a period of six hundred years, but it is not true for contemporary Russia. Very often those who go into the factories are not proletarians, but all sorts of casual elements.

The problem is to learn to organise the work properly, so as not to lag behind, so as to avoid friction, which does occur, in time, and not separate administration from politics. For our administration and politics rest on the whole of the vanguard maintaining contact with the whole mass of the proletariat and with the whole mass of the peasantry. If anybody forgets about these cogs, if he becomes entirely absorbed in administration, misfortune will re-

sult. The mistake which the Donets Basin workers committed is insignificant compared with other mistakes we have committed, but it is a typical example. The Central Committee unanimously demanded: "Allow this group to remain; bring all conflicts, even minor ones, before the Central Committee, for the Donets Basin is not a casual district, it is a district without which Socialist construction will simply remain a pious wish." But the whole of our political power, the whole authority of the Central Committee proved inadequate.

This time a mistake in administration was committed, of course; in addition, a heap of other mistakes were committed.

This example shows that the whole point is not in possessing political power, but in being able to administer, in being able to put people in their proper places, in being able to avoid petty conflicts, so that there shall be no interruption in state economic work. This is what is lacking, this is the mistake.

I think that when we talk about our revolution and weigh up the fate of the revolution, we must strictly distinguish the problems which the revolution has solved completely and which have gone into the history of the world-historic turn as something inalienable from capitalism. Our revolution has such solutions to record. Let the Mensheviks and Otto Bauer, the representative of the Two-and-a-Half International, shout as much as they like that, "Theirs is a bourgeois revolution"; we say that our task is to carry the bourgeois revolution to the end. As a certain White Guard newspaper expressed it, for four hundred years manure was collected in our state institutions, but the Bolsheviks cleaned out this manure in four years. This is the great service we rendered. What did the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries do? Nothing. Neither in our country nor in advanced, enlightened Germany can they clean up the manure of mediævalism. And they reproach us for doing what stands very much to our credit. The fact that we carried the revolution to its conclusion is something inalienable that stands to our credit.

War is now in the air. The trade unions, for example, the reformist trade unions, are passing resolutions against war and are threatening to call strikes in opposition to war. Recently, if I am

not mistaken, I read a report in the newspapers to the effect that an excellent Communist in the French Chamber made a speech in opposition to war and stated that the workers would prefer to rise in revolt rather than go to war. The question cannot be put in the way we put it in 1912, when the Basle manifesto was published. The Russian revolution alone showed how it was possible to emerge from war, and what effort this entailed; it showed what emerging from a reactionary war by revolutionary methods means. Reactionary imperialist wars are inevitable in all parts of the world; and humanity cannot forget, and will not forget, in solving problems of this sort, that tens of millions were slaughtered at that time and will be again if war breaks out. We are living in the twentieth century, and the only nation that emerged from a reactionary war by revolutionary methods, not for the benefit of this or that government, but by overthrowing it, was the Russian nation, and it was the Russian revolution that extricated it. And what has been won by the Russian revolution is inalienable. No power on earth can deprive us of that, any more than any power on earth can deprive us of what the Soviet state has already created. This is a world-historic victory. For hundreds of years states have been built according to the bourgeois model, and for the first time a non-bourgeois form of state has been discovered. Our apparatus may be a bad one, but it is said that the first steam engine to be invented was also a bad one, and it is not even known whether it worked or not. That is not the point; the point is that it was invented. Even assuming that the form of the first steam engine was unsuitable, the point is that we now have steam engines. Even if our state apparatus is very bad, it has been created, the greatest historical invention has been made, a proletarian type of state has been created. Therefore, let the whole of Europe, let thousands of bourgeois newspapers broadcast news about the alleged horrors and poverty that prevail in our country, about suffering being the only lot of the toilers in our country; the fact is that all over the world all the workers are attracted towards the Soviet state. These are the great and inalienable gains that we have achieved. But for us, the representatives of the Communist Party, this only means opening the door. The task that now confronts us is that of laying the foundations of Socialist

economy. Has this been done? No, it has not. We still lack the Socialist foundation. Those Communists who imagine that we have it are greatly mistaken. The whole point is to separate, firmly, clearly and soberly, what represents the world-historic service rendered by the Russian revolution from what we do very badly, from what has not yet been created, and what we shall have to alter many times yet.

Political events are always very confused and complicated. They can be compared with a chain. It is no use clutching at only one link in order to grasp the whole chain. It is impossible artificially to select one particular link to clutch at. What was the main thing in 1917? It was emerging from the war, which the whole of the people demanded, and this covered everything. Revolutionary Russia extricated herself from the war. Tremendous efforts were made, but the main requirements of the people were taken into account, and this brought us victory for many years. . . . And the people sensed, the peasants saw, every soldier who returned from the front understood perfectly well that the Soviet government was a more democratic government, one that was closer to the toilers. No matter how many outrageous and absurd things we may have done in other spheres, the fact that we took this main task into account proves that everything was right.

What was the main thing in 1919 and 1920? Military resistance. The enemy was marching against us. the world-powerful Entente was strangling us. No propaganda was required here. Every non-party peasant understood what was going on. The landlord was coming. The Communists could fight him. That is why, taken in the mass, the peasants followed the lead of the Communists. that is why we were victorious.

In 1921 the main thing was to retreat in good order. That is why stern discipline was required. The "Workers' Opposition" said: "You are underestimating the workers; the workers should display greater initiative." But initiative should be displayed in retreating in good order and in maintaining stern discipline. Anyone who introduced a note of panic or of violation of discipline would have doomed the revolution to defeat, for there is nothing more difficult than retreating with people who have been accustomed to vic-

tory, who are imbued with revolutionary views and ideals, and who, in their hearts, regard every retreat as something shameful. The greatest danger is the violation of good order, and the greatest task is to maintain good order.

And what is the main thing now? The main thing now, and I should like to sum up my report with this, is not in our having changed our policy. An incredible lot is talked about this in connection with the N.E.P. It is all talking in the air. It is the most harmful twaddle. In connection with the N.E.P. efforts are being made to change our institutions and to form new institutions. All this is harmful twaddle. We have reached the position when the main thing is men, the proper selection of people. This is difficult to understand for a revolutionary who is accustomed to fighting against pettiness and uplift educators, and who, instead of changing institutions, has advanced the role of individuals. But we have reached a position the political significance of which we must soberly estimate; we have gone so far that we cannot hold all the positions, and we should not hold them all.

During the past few years our international position has improved enormously. The Soviet type of state is our achievement, it is a step forward for the whole of humanity, and the Communist International every day corroborates this with the news that is received from any country. Nobody has the slightest shadow of doubt about this. From the point of view of practical work, however, the position is that unless the Communists render the masses of the peasants practical assistance they will not receive their support. We should not concentrate our attention on legislation, on passing better decrees, etc. There was a period when passing decrees was a form of propaganda. People used to laugh at us and say that the Bolsheviks do not realise that their decrees are not carried out; the whole of the White Guard press was full of jeers of this sort. But this was a legitimate period. It was the time when the Bolsheviks had taken power and said to the rank-and-file peasant, to the rank-and-file worker: "Here is a decree; this is how we should like to have the state administered. Try it!" From the very outset we gave the simple workers and peasants an idea of politics in the form of decrees. The result was the enormous confidence we enjoyed and

now enjoy among the masses of the people. This was an essential period in the beginning of the revolution; without it we would not have risen on the crest of the revolutionary wave, we would have dragged in its wake. Without it we would not have won the confidence of all the workers and peasants who wanted to build their lives on new lines. But this period has passed, and we refuse to understand this. Now the peasants and workers will laugh at us if we order this or that institution to be built or altered. Now the simple worker and peasant will display no interest in this, and they will be right, because this is not the central task now. This is not the sort of thing that you, the Communist, should now go to the people with. Although we who are engaged in state institutions are always submerged in such petty things, this is not the link that we must grasp, this is not the main thing. The main thing is that people are not in their proper places, that responsible Communists who acquitted themselves splendidly throughout the revolution have been put to commercial and industrial work which they know nothing about and prevent us from seeing the truth; for rogues and swindlers hide behind their backs. The point is that we do not verify the practical fulfilment of orders. This is a prosaic job, a small job; but we are living after the greatest political change that has ever occurred, under conditions which compel us for a time to live in the midst of the capitalist system. The main thing is not politics in the narrow sense of the word (what is said in the newspapers is just political twaddle, there is nothing Socialistic in it at all), the main thing is not resolutions, not institutions and reorganisation. We shall do this if it is necessary, but do not go to the people with it; select the necessary people and verify what has been done practically in the way of carrying out orders. This is what the people attach value to.

Among the people we are as a drop in the ocean, and we shall be able to administer only when we properly express what the people realise. Unless we do this, the Communist Party will not be able to lead the proletariat. the proletariat will not lead the masses, and the whole machine will collapse. The thing the people and the masses of the toilers regard as fundamental for themselves today is the assistance they receive in their desperate condition of want

and starvation; they want some real evidence of the improvement which the peasant needs and to which he is accustomed. The peasant knows the market and trade. We could not introduce direct Communist distribution. We lacked the factories and their equipment for this. That being the case, we must give the peasants what they want through the medium of trade, and give it as well as the capitalist gave it, otherwise the people will not be able to bear such administration. This is the main thing. And unless something unexpected arises, this should become the main thing in our work in 1922 on three conditions.

The first condition is that there is no intervention. We are doing all we can in the diplomatic field to avoid it; nevertheless, it may occur any day. We must indeed be on the alert, and we must agree to make certain heavy sacrifices for the benefit of the Red Army, within definite limits, of course. We are confronted by the whole bourgeois world, which is only seeking the form in which to strangle us. Our Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries are nothing more nor less than the agents of the bourgeoisie. Such is their political position.

The second condition is that the financial crisis is not too severe. The crisis is approaching. You will hear about it when we discuss the question of financial policy. If it is too severe and arduous we shall have to alter many things again and concentrate all efforts on one thing. If it is not too severe it may even be useful: it will brush up the Communists in all the state trusts; only we must not forget to do this. The financial crisis will shake up the institutions and enterprises, and the unfit will be the first to collapse. Only we must take care that all the blame for this is not thrown on the specialists, and that the responsible Communists are not praised for being very good fellows who have fought at the fronts and have always worked well. Thus, if the financial crisis is not too severe, it will be beneficial in that it will brush up all the responsible Communists in the business institutions, not in the way that the Central Control Commission and the Central Verification Commission do it, but in the way it should be done.

The third condition is that we do not make any political mistakes in this period. Of course, if we do make political mistakes all our

economic construction will be disrupted and we shall have to enter into controversies about correction and direction. If we do not make any sad mistakes, the main thing in the near future will not be decrees and politics in the narrow sense of the word, not institutions and their organisation—the responsible Communists and the Soviet institutions will deal with these things if necessary—the main thing in all this work will be selecting the proper people and verifying the fulfilment of orders. If we learn something practical, if we do something practically useful in this field, we shall once again overcome all difficulties.

In conclusion I must deal with the practical side of the question of our higher institutions and of the Party's attitude towards them. Wrong relations have arisen between the Party and the Soviet institutions; on this we are quite unanimous. I gave you one example to show that concrete minor matters are dragged before the Political Bureau. It is difficult to solve this problem formally, for there is only one governing party at the head of affairs in our country, and a member of the Party cannot be prohibited from lodging complaints. That is why all that comes up on the Council of People's Commissars is dragged before the Political Bureau. I am largely to blame for this, for to a large extent contact between the Council of People's Commissars and the Political Bureau was maintained through me. When I was obliged to retire from work it was found that the two wheels were not working in unison and Kamenev had to bear a treble load to maintain this contact. As it is hardly likely that I shall return to work in the near future, all hopes rest on the fact that we now have another two vice-chairmen—Comrade Tsurupa, whom the Germans have purged, and Comrade Rykov, whom the Germans have given an excellent clean-out. Even Wilhelm, Emperor of the Germans, proved useful to us; I did not expect it. Comrade Rykov was under the medical treatment of Wilhelm's surgeon; the latter cut out Rykov's worst part and left it in Germany, and leaving the best part of Rykov, sent him back to us completely purged. If this system is continued in the future things will go very well.

But joking aside, a word or two about the main instructions. On this point there is complete unanimity on the Central Committee,

and I hope that the congress will pay the closest attention to it and endorse the instructions that the Political Bureau and the Central Committee be relieved of minor matters, and that the quality of the work of the responsible workers be improved. The People's Commissars must be responsible for their work and should not bring these matters up first on the Council of People's Commissars and then on the Political Bureau. Formally, we cannot abolish the right to lodge complaints with the Central Committee, for our Party is the only governing party in the country. But we must put a stop to the habit of bringing every petty matter before the Central Committee; we must raise the prestige of the Council of People's Commissars. The Commissars and not the Vice-Commissars must do most of the work. The character of the Council must be changed in the direction that I have not succeeded in changing it during the past year, *viz.*, of paying much more attention to verifying the fulfilment of orders. We shall have another two vice-chairmen, Comrades Rykov and Tsurupa. Rykov succeeded in putting the Special Army Supplies Commission on its feet, and that body worked well. Tsurupa has organised one of the best of our People's Commissariats. If the two of them devote the maximum of attention to tightening up the People's Commissariats in regard to fulfilment and responsibility, we shall make some, if only slight, progress. We have eighteen People's Commissariats, of these not less than fifteen are useless; we cannot find good People's Commissars everywhere, and so it will be a good thing if our comrades devote more attention to these questions. Comrade Rykov must become a member of the Bureau of the Central Committee and a member of the presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, because contact must be maintained between these two bodies, otherwise the principal wheels will be turning to no purpose.

In this connection we must see to it that the number of the commissions of the Council of People's Commissars and of the Council of Labour and Defence¹ are reduced, that they shall know and

¹ The Council of Labour and Defence was formed in accordance with a decision passed by the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party in March 1919. Its functions are to co-ordinate and direct the work of the various business Commissariats.—*Ed.*

settle their own affairs and not split up into an infinite number of commissions. A few days ago the commissions were purged. It was found that there were one hundred and twenty commissions. How many were necessary? Sixteen. And this is not the first purging. Instead of being responsible for their work, carrying out the decisions of the Council of People's Commissars and knowing that they are responsible for this, the leading comrades hide behind commissions. The devil himself would break his neck in these commissions. Nobody knows what is going on, who is responsible; everything is mixed up, and finally a decision is passed according to which everybody is responsible.

In this connection reference must be made to the need for extending and developing the autonomy and activities of the Oblast Economic Conferences of the Executive Committees. The administrative division of Russia has now been made on scientific lines; the economic, climatic and social conditions, the conditions of obtaining fuel, local industry, etc., have all been taken into account. On the basis of this division, Regional and Oblast Economic Conferences have been instituted. Alterations may be made here and there, of course, but the prestige of these Economic Conferences must be raised.

Then we must see to it that the All-Russian Central Executive Committee shall work more energetically, meet in session more regularly and for longer periods. The Sessions of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee should discuss bills which are sometimes hastily brought before the Council of People's Commissars when there is no need for it. It would be better to postpone such bills and to give the local workers an opportunity to study them carefully. More strict demands should be made upon those who draft the bills. This is not done.

If the Sessions of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee last longer, they can split up into sections and subcommissions, and thus be able to verify the work more strictly and strive to achieve what in my opinion is the whole crux, the whole essence of the present political situation: the concentration of attention on the proper selection of people and verification of actual fulfilment.

It must be admitted, we must not be afraid to admit, that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the responsible Communists are not in the jobs they are now fit for, that they are unable to perform their duties, and that they must sit down to learn them. If this is admitted, and since we have the opportunity of learning—judging by the general international situation we shall have time to do so—we must do it, come what may.

CLOSING SPEECH AT THE ELEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.)

April 2, 1922

COMRADES, the work of the congress is now drawing to a close.

The first distinction that strikes one in comparing this congress with the preceding one is the greater solidarity, the greater unanimity and greater organisational unity displayed at this congress.

Only a small part of one of the sections of the opposition that existed at the last congress placed itself outside the Party.

On the trade union question and on the New Economic Policy no disagreements, or hardly any disagreements, were revealed in our Party.

The radically and fundamentally "new" achievement of this congress is that it has provided vivid proof that our enemies are wrong in tirelessly asserting that our Party is becoming senile and is losing its flexibility of mind and body.

No. We have not lost this flexibility.

When the objective state of affairs in Russia, and all over the world, called for an advance, for an audacious, rapid and determined attack on the enemy, we made that attack. If necessary we shall do so again and again.

By that we raised our revolution to a height hitherto unprecedented anywhere in the world. No power on earth, no matter how much evil, hardship and suffering it may yet cause for millions and hundreds of millions of people, can take from us the principal gains of our revolution, for these are no longer "our" gains, but world-historic gains.

But when, as was the case in the spring of 1921, the vanguard of the revolution was in danger of becoming isolated from the

masses of the people, from the masses of the peasants, whom it must skilfully lead forward, we unanimously and firmly decided to retreat. And, taken on the whole, during the past year we retreated in good revolutionary order.

The proletarian revolutions which are maturing in all advanced countries will not be able to solve their problems without combining the ability to fight heroically and to attack with the ability to retreat in good revolutionary order. The experience of the second period of our struggle, *i.e.*, the experience of retreat, will probably be of equal service to the workers of at all events several countries in the future as the experience of the first period of our revolution, *i.e.*, the experience of audacious attack, undoubtedly will be.

Now we have decided to consider the retreat at an end.

This means that the whole task of our policy presents itself in a new way.

The whole point now is that the vanguard shall not be afraid of the task of educating itself, of changing itself, of frankly admitting that it is not sufficiently trained, that it lacks the necessary ability. The whole point now is to advance as an incomparably wider and larger mass, in no other way than together with the peasantry, proving to them by deeds, in practice, by experience, that we are learning, and that we shall learn to assist them, to lead them forward. In the present international situation, in the present state of the productive forces of Russia, this problem can be solved only very slowly, cautiously, in a businesslike way, and by testing in a practical way every step that is taken a thousand times.

If voices are raised in our Party against this extremely slow and extremely cautious progress, these voices will be isolated ones.

The Party as a whole has understood, and will now prove by deeds that it has understood, the need for organising all its work at the present time in this way and in no other. And since we have understood it, we shall achieve our goal!

I declare the Eleventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party closed.

A LETTER TO THE FIFTH ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS

DEAR COMRADES,

This is the first time since my long illness that I am able to address a congress, even though in writing. Permit me therefore to confine myself to warmly greeting you and to a few brief remarks on the position and tasks of our industry and of our republic. Our position is particularly difficult because we lack the means to restore our basic capital, *i.e.*, machinery, tools, buildings, etc.; and it is precisely that part of industry known as "heavy industry" which is the principal basis of Socialism. In capitalist countries this basic capital is usually restored by means of loans. We are refused loans until we restore the property of the capitalists and landlords; but this we cannot and will not do. The only road that is open to us is the long and extraordinarily difficult road of slowly accumulating our savings, of raising taxation in order gradually to repair our destroyed railways, machinery, buildings, etc. So far, we are the only country in the world in which the toiling peasants, under the leadership of the workers, are building Socialism, resolutely rejecting the leadership of the capitalists, who, camouflaged by all sorts of fine words about democracy, liberty, etc., are actually reinforcing the private property of the capitalists and landlords, are creating the rule of a handful of rich who have shared the whole world among themselves and who are fighting for its redivision, for the enslavement of hundreds of millions of weaker and more backward peoples.

As long as we remain alone, the task of restoring our national economy will be an extremely heavy burden on our shoulders. All the workers and peasants must exert their efforts to the very utmost; our state apparatus, which is still working very badly, must be improved and made less costly in order to improve the conditions of the toilers and to restore, if only to some extent, our econo-

my, which was destroyed by the imperialist and civil wars.

Let every intelligent peasant and worker who may be inclined to be despondent owing to our hard conditions of life, or the extremely slow pace of our work of state construction, remember the recent past, when the capitalists and landlords ruled. If he does that, his vigour in his work will return to him. Exert all efforts to intensify and improve our work on all sides—this is the only way of saving the rule of the workers and peasants.

With comradely greetings,

V. ULYANOV (LENIN)

September 17, 1922

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE PLENUM OF THE MOSCOW SOVIET, NOVEMBER 20, 1922

COMRADES, I am very sorry that I have been unable to attend your plenum earlier, and I ask you to excuse me. I understand that you intended to give me the opportunity of visiting the Moscow Soviet several weeks ago, but I was unable to take advantage of it because in December, after my illness, I became incapacitated for work, to use the professional term, for a considerable length of time, and owing to my reduced capacity for work I had to put off my present speech from one week to another. At first, as you know, I threw a great deal of my work on the shoulders of Comrade Tsurupa and then of Comrade Rykov. Later I had to throw the rest on Comrade Kamenev, and, again using a professional term, he had to carry two loads; but, continuing the metaphor, it must be said that he turned out to be an exceptionally strong and willing horse. Be that as it may, we cannot allow him to carry two loads, and I am impatiently looking forward to the time when Comrades Tsurupa and Rykov return¹ so that we can divide the work a little more fairly. Owing to my reduced working capacity, I take much more time in examining affairs than I should like.

In December 1921, when I had to leave my work entirely, we had reached the end of the year. That was when we were passing to the New Economic Policy and we found immediately, although we started it at the beginning of 1921, that this was a difficult, I would say a very difficult, matter. More than eighteen months have passed since we started this transition, and it is time, I think, that the majority of us took our new places in accordance with the new conditions, particularly the conditions of the New Economic Policy.

The sphere of foreign politics has been least affected by the

¹ Both were in Germany for medical treatment at the time.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

change. Here we continued the course we had been pursuing, and I think I can honestly say that we continued it quite consistently and with enormous success. There is no need for me to deal with this in detail here: the recapture of Vladivostok and the subsequent demonstration and state federal declaration which you read in the newspapers the other day have very clearly proved that no change is called for in this respect. We are on a very clearly defined road and we have ensured success for ourselves in the face of all the states of the world, although several of them are still ready to declare that they refuse to sit at the same table with us. Nevertheless, economic relations and diplomatic relations are being established, should be established, and undoubtedly will be established. Every state that tries to hinder this runs the risk of losing the race, and perhaps on certain matters of material importance runs the risk of finding itself in a disadvantageous position. We all see this now, and from other sources besides newspapers. I think that comrades who go abroad are able to realise how great are the changes that are taking place. In this respect, to use an old metaphor, we proceeded on our journey without having to change either trains or horses.

In regard to our home policy, however, the change we made in the spring of 1921—which we were compelled to make by very important and convincing circumstances, so much so, that there was no controversy or difference of opinion concerning it among us—is continuing to cause us difficulties, I will say great difficulties. This is not because we doubt that the change was necessary—there is no doubt about that whatever—it is not because we doubt whether the attempt to introduce the New Economic Policy has brought the successes we expected. I can say quite definitely that there is no doubt whatever even about this in the ranks of our Party or in the ranks of the vast mass of the non-party workers and peasants.

In this respect the question presents no difficulties. The difficulty lies in the fact that we are confronted with a problem which very often requires for its solution the enlistment of new people, it requires special measures and special methods. There is still some doubt about the correctness of this thing or that, changes in this direction or that, and it must be said that the one and the other will re-

main for quite a considerable time. "The New Economic Policy." What a queer term! This policy was called the New Economic Policy because it meant turning back. We are now retreating, going back, as it were; but we are doing this in order to get a better run for our longer leap forward. This was the only condition on which we agreed to retreat in pursuing our New Economic Policy. We do not yet know where and how we must regroup, adapt and reorganise our forces in order to start our persistent advance after our retreat. In order to carry out all these operations in proper order we must, as the proverb says, measure, not ten times, but a hundred times, before we decide to cut. We must do this in order to be able to cope with all the incredible difficulties that confront us in solving all our problems. You know perfectly well the price we paid for our achievements; you know how long the civil war dragged on and what forces it consumed. But the recapture of Vladivostok has shown us (Vladivostok is very far away, but it is our town!), has revealed to us all a universal striving towards us, towards our gains. Here and there—both are the R.S.F.S.R. This striving has relieved us of both the internal and the foreign enemies who were marching against us. I have in mind Japan.

We have won a very definite diplomatic position, one which is recognised by the whole world. You all see this. You see the results of it. But how much time was required to achieve it? We have compelled our enemies to recognise our rights in economic as well as in commercial policy. The conclusion of trade agreements proves this.

Wo can see why, eighteen months after we have taken the path of what is called the New Economic Policy, we find it so incredibly difficult to march along this road. We are living in a country that has been so devastated by war, that has been so beaten out of its normal groove, that has suffered and borne so much, that we are now compelled to start all our calculations from small things, from a small, pre-war percentage. We apply this measure to our conditions of life, and sometimes we do so very impatiently and heatedly, and every time we have it brought home to us again that boundless difficulties confront us. The task we have undertaken appears to be all the more boundless for the reason that we

compare it with the conditions of the ordinary bourgeois state. We undertook this task because we realised that we cannot expect the assistance from very rich countries that is usually received under such circumstances. After the civil war we were almost boycotted; we were told: "We shall refuse to establish with you the economic intercourse which we usually establish, and which is normal in the capitalist world."

More than eighteen months have passed since we adopted the New Economic Policy, and much more time has passed since we concluded our first international treaty. Nevertheless, we still feel the effects of the boycott of the whole of the bourgeoisie and of all the governments. We could not expect anything else when we entered the new economic conditions, but we had no doubts whatever about its being necessary for us to adopt them, and about our having to achieve success unaided. It is becoming more and more clear as time passes that no assistance that we may or will receive from the capitalist countries will remove this condition; on the contrary, in all probability it will aggravate it in the overwhelming majority of cases. "Unaided," we said to ourselves. "Unaided," say nearly all the capitalist countries with whom we have had transactions, with whom we have established contacts and with whom we have started negotiations. Herein lies the special difficulty. We must appreciate this difficulty. We built up our state system in the course of over three years of incredibly strenuous and heroic effort. Under the conditions in which we have been up to now we could not stop to ask whether we were not breaking up too much, we could not stop to ask whether it would not entail too much sacrifice, because we were compelled to make enormous sacrifices, because the struggle we then began to wage (you know this perfectly well and there is no need for me to enlarge on it) was a life-and-death struggle against the old social system which we fought in order to win for ourselves the right to existence and peaceful development. We have won this right. It is not merely we who say this, it is not only said by witnesses who may be accused of being partial to us. No, in the majority of cases it is admitted by those who are partial, of course, not to us, but to Denikin, the heroes of Vladivostok, of the occupation, etc. Now, in examining

our tasks with the closest attention, we must understand that the principal task at the present time is not to surrender the old gains. We shall not surrender a single one of our old gains. At the same time we are confronted by an entirely new task; the old may become a hindrance. This is a task that is the most difficult of all to understand; but we must understand it in order to learn how to work; when necessary to turn ourselves inside out, as it were. I think, comrades, that these words and slogans are intelligible, because during the period of nearly a year that I was compelled to stay away, you, having this practical task on your hands, have been obliged to discuss and think about it from different angles and for a hundred and one causes, and I am sure that your reflections have brought you to a single conclusion, and that is that we must now display ever so much more of the flexibility that we have hitherto displayed on the field of civil war.

We must not abandon the old. The series of concessions which we have made and which puts us on the level of capitalist countries enables these countries to establish relations with us and ensures their profits—sometimes, perhaps, larger profits than they are entitled to. A few days ago the newspapers discussed the question of a concession proposed by Urquhart, who until recently was nearly all the time opposed to us in the civil war. He said: "We shall achieve our aim in civil war against Russia, which dared deprive us of so-and-so and so-and-so." After all this we had to enter into intercourse with him. We did not refuse to do so, in fact we were very glad to do so, but we said: "Excuse us, but we are not going to surrender what we have won. Russia is so large, the economic possibilities are so enormous, that we think we are right in accepting your kind offer, but we shall discuss it as cool businessmen." True, nothing came of our first conversation because we could not agree to his proposal for political reasons. We had to reject it. As long as the English refused to recognise our right to take part in discussing the question of the Dardanelles we could not accept it; but soon after we rejected it we had to examine the substance of this question. We discussed the question as to whether it would be to our advantage to grant this concession, and if it was to our advantage, on what terms. We had to discuss the question of the price.

This is what clearly shows, comrades, how differently we must approach questions now compared with the way we approached them before. Before, the Communist said, "I will give my life," and that seemed to him to be a very simple thing, although it was not always a simple thing. Now we Communists are confronted by an entirely different task. Now we must calculate everything, and every one of you must learn to calculate. We must calculate in capitalist surroundings how we can ensure our existence, how to profit from our enemies, who, of course, will bargain with us, who have not forgotten how to bargain, and who will bargain at our expense. We do not forget this, and we do not imagine that somewhere representatives of the trading class will become transformed into lambs and heap favours on us gratis. This never happens, and we do not place our hopes on that; what we count on is that, being accustomed to offering resistance, we will succeed in extricating ourselves and learn to trade, to make profit and extricate ourselves from difficult economic positions. But this task is a very difficult one. And it is on this task that we are working. I wish we could all clearly understand how great is the gulf that lies between the old and the new. But great as this gulf is, we, who learnt how to manoeuvre on the field of battle, must understand that the manoeuvre that now confronts us, that we are now engaged in, is the most difficult of all. On the other hand, it is evidently the last one. We must try our strength on it and show that we are not only repeating the lessons we learnt yesterday, that we are not only going over the old lessons. No, we have begun to learn over again, and will learn over again, so as to achieve a definite and obvious success. And I think that for the sake of learning over again we should firmly declare to ourselves once again that although we turned back in adopting the New Economic Policy, we did so determined not to surrender anything new and at the same time to give the capitalists such inducements as would compel every state, no matter how hostile it might be towards us, to do business and enter into intercourse with us. Comrade Krassin, who has had many conversations with Urquhart, this head and bulwark of intervention, says that, after having made strenuous efforts to impose the old system upon us all over Russia. Urquhart sat down at the

same table with him and asked: "What price? How much? For how many years?" This is still a fairly long way from signing a number of concession agreements and thus entering into absolutely definite and, from the point of view of bourgeois society, unshakable treaty relations; we see that we are already approaching this, that we have almost reached it, but have not yet reached it. Comrades, we must admit this and not get a swelled head. We are still a long way from having achieved what will make us strong, independent and calmly certain that we have nothing to fear from any capitalist transaction—calmly certain that, however harsh a transaction may be, we shall enter into it, delve into its very substance, and settle it. That is why the political and Party work that we have commenced in this sphere must be continued; that is why we must abandon old methods and adopt absolutely new ones.

We still have the old apparatus, and our present task is to re-organise it on new lines. We cannot do this all at once, but we must see to it that the Communists who are available to us are properly distributed. These Communists must become the masters of the apparatus which has been placed in their charge, and not, as is often the case now, the slaves of this apparatus. There is no sense in concealing this, it must be openly admitted. These are the tasks and the difficulties that confront us just at the time when we have taken the business road, when we cannot approach Socialism as if it were a solemnly painted icon. We must take the proper direction, everything must be tested; the masses, the whole population, must test our road and be able to say, "Yes, this is better than the old system." This is the task we have set ourselves. Our Party, a small group compared with the total population of the country, has undertaken this task. This grain of sand has undertaken the task of transforming everything, and it will perform it. We have proved that this is not a utopia, but a real thing, for which people are striving. We have all seen this; it is done. We must transform things in such a way that the majority of the toilers, the masses of the peasants and workers may be able to say: "You are not praising yourselves, we are praising you. We say that you have achieved the best results, and not a single sensible person will ever dream of returning to the old system." But this is not the case yet. *That is*

why the N.E.P. continues to be the principal, urgent, all-embracing slogan of the present day. We shall not forget a single one of the slogans we learnt yesterday. We can say this to anybody quite calmly and without the slightest hesitation; and every step we take proves that it is true. But we still have to adapt ourselves to the New Economic Policy. We must be able to change all its bad sides—you know them very well and there is no need to enumerate them—to reduce them to a definite minimum; we must be able to arrange everything in a methodical manner. Our laws create every opportunity for this. Shall we be able to organise properly? This question is by no means settled yet. We are studying it. Every issue of our Party newspaper contains half a score of articles showing that at such-and-such a factory, such-and-such a manufacturer has such-and-such terms of lease; but at such-and-such a factory, of which our comrade, a Communist, is the director, such-and-such conditions prevail. Does it produce a profit? Is it paying? We have reached the very core of workaday questions, and this is an enormous gain. Socialism is no longer a matter of the distant future, or an abstract picture, or an icon. We still retain our old, very low opinion of icons. We have dragged Socialism into everyday life, and here we must be able to keep our bearings. This is the task of our day, this is the task of our epoch. Permit me to conclude by expressing the conviction that, difficult as this task may be, new as it may be compared with our previous task, and no matter how many difficulties it may cause us, we shall all, not in one day, but in the course of several years, all of us together, fulfil it, come what may; and N.E.P. Russia will be transformed into Socialist Russia.

HOW WE SHOULD REORGANISE THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' INSPECTION

A PROPOSAL TO THE TWELFTH PARTY CONGRESS

UNDOUBTEDLY, the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection presents an enormous difficulty for us, and this difficulty has not been solved yet. I think that the comrades who in trying to solve the difficulty deny that the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection is useful and necessary are wrong. At the same time I do not deny that the problem of our state apparatus and of improving it is a very difficult one, that it is not yet solved by far, and that it is an extremely urgent one.

With the exception of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, our state apparatus is very largely a survival of the old one, and has least of all undergone serious change. It has only been slightly repainted on the surface, but in all other things it is a typical relic of our old state apparatus. In order to discover a method of really renovating it, I think we must turn to our experience of the civil war.

How did we act in the most dangerous moments of the civil war?

We concentrated our best Party forces in the Red Army; we mobilised the best of our workers; we sought for new forces where the deepest roots of our dictatorship lay.

I am convinced that we must seek the source of reorganisation of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection in the same place. I propose that our Twelfth Congress adopt the following plan of reorganisation, which is based on a peculiar expansion of our Central Control Commission.

The plenum of our Central Committee has already revealed a tendency to develop into something in the nature of a superior Party conference. It meets, on the average, not more than once in two months, while the current work of the Central Committee is, as is known, conducted by our Political Bureau, by our Organisa-

tion Bureau, our Secretariat, etc. I think we ought to go to the end of the road we have thus taken and transform the plenum of the Central Committee entirely into a superior Party conference, which shall meet once in two months jointly with the Central Control Commission. The Central Control Commission should be amalgamated with the main body of the reorganised Workers' and Peasants' Inspection on the following lines.

I propose that the congress elect from seventy-five to one hundred workers and peasants as new members of the Central Control Commission. The elected persons should be subjected to the same Party tests as ordinary members of the Central Committee are subjected to, for they are to enjoy the same rights as the members of the Central Committee.

On the other hand, the staff of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection must be reduced to three or four hundred. These must be put to a strict test in regard to their conscientiousness and knowledge of our state apparatus, and also to a special test in regard to their knowledge of the principles of the scientific organisation of labour in general, and of administrative and office work in particular.

In my opinion, the amalgamation of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection with the Central Control Commission will be beneficial to both institutions. On the one hand, the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection will thus achieve such a high prestige that it will certainly be no worse than the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. On the other hand, our Central Committee, together with the Central Control Commission, will definitely take the road of becoming a superior Party conference, which in fact it has already started on, and on which it should proceed to the end in order to be able to fulfil its functions properly in two respects: in respect to *its* methodical, expedient and systematic organisation and work, and in respect to maintaining contacts with really broad masses through the medium of the best of our workers and peasants.

I foresee an objection that may come, directly or indirectly, from those spheres which are making our apparatus obsolete, *i.e.*, from those who advocate the preservation of our apparatus in the impossible and improper pre-revolutionary form in which it exists

to the present day (incidentally, we now have an opportunity, which rarely occurs in history, of ascertaining the period necessary for bringing about radical social changes, and we now see clearly *what* can be done in five years, and what requires much more time).

The objection I foresee is that the change I propose will lead to chaos; that the members of the Central Control Commission will wander around all the institutions, will not know to whom to apply on any particular question, will cause disorganisation everywhere, distract employees from their current work, etc., etc.

I think that the malicious source of this objection is so obvious that it need not be replied to. It goes without saying that the presidium of the Central Control Commission, the People's Commissar of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and his collegium (and also, in the proper cases, the Secretariat of our Central Committee), will need more than one year of persistent work in order properly to organise their Commissariat and its work in conjunction with the Central Control Commission. In my opinion, the People's Commissar of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, as well as the whole of his collegium, can (and should) remain such and guide the work of the whole of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, including that of all the members of the Central Control Commission who will be "attached" to it. According to my plan, the three or four hundred employees of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection should perform purely secretarial work for the members of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and for the attached members of the Central Control Commission, and they should be highly skilled, specially tested, specially reliable, and highly paid, so that they may be released from their present truly unhappy (to say the least) position of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection officials.

I am sure that the reduction of the staff to the number I have indicated will result in a great improvement in the quality of the workers in the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and in the quality of the whole of its work. At the same time it will enable the People's Commissar and his collegium to concentrate their efforts entirely on organising the work and on systematically and steadily improving its quality, which is so very necessary for our workers' and peasants' government and for our Soviet system.

On the other hand, I think that the People's Commissar of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection should study the question of partly amalgamating and partly co-ordinating the higher institutes for the organisation of labour (the Central Institute of Labour, the Institute for the Scientific Organisation of Labour, etc.), of which there are no less than twelve in our republic. Excessive uniformity and an excessive desire to amalgamate that arises from this will be harmful. On the contrary, what is needed here is a sensible and expedient mean between amalgamating all these institutions and establishing the proper border line between them, allowing for a certain amount of independence for each of them.

There is no doubt that our Central Committee will gain no less from this reorganisation than the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection in the way of contacts with the masses and of enhancing the regularity and effectiveness of its work. It will then be possible to make stricter and more responsible preparations for the meetings of the Political Bureau, which a definite number of members of the Central Control Commission should attend, either for a definite period, or according to a definite plan.

The People's Commissariat for Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, in conjunction with the presidium of the Central Control Commission, should distribute the work of its members with a view to making it their duty to attend the meetings of the Political Bureau for the purpose of examining all the documents appertaining to matters that come before it in one way or another, or to devote their time to the theoretical study of the scientific methods of organising labour, or to take a practical part in the work of supervising and improving our state apparatus, from the higher state institutions to the lower local bodies, etc.

I think also that in addition to the political advantages resulting from the fact that the members of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission will, as a consequence of this reform, be better informed and better prepared for the meetings of the Political Bureau (all the documents connected with the business to be discussed at these meetings should be sent to all the members of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission not later than the day before the meeting of the Political Bureau, except

in very urgent cases, for which special methods of informing the members of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission and of settling these matters must be devised), there will be the advantage that the influence of purely personal and casual factors on our Central Committee will diminish, and this will reduce the danger of a split.

Our Central Committee has grown into a strictly centralised and highly authoritative group, but the work of this group is not conducted in conditions that correspond to this authority. The reform that I propose should remove this defect, and the members of the Central Control Commission whose duty it will be to attend the meetings of the Political Bureau in a definite number will have to form a compact group which, "without respect for persons," should see to it that nobody's authority should serve as an obstacle to their putting interpellations, seeing all the documents, and in general to their keeping themselves informed of all things, and of seeing to it that affairs are properly conducted.

Of course, in our Soviet Republic, the social system is based on the collaboration of two classes: the workers and peasants, in which the "nepmen," *i.e.*, the bourgeoisie, are now permitted to participate on certain terms. If serious class disagreements arise between these classes, a split is inevitable. But the grounds for such a split are not necessarily inherent in our social system, and the principal task of our Central Committee and Central Control Commission, as well as of our Party as a whole, is to watch the circumstances which may cause a split very closely and forestall them; for in the last resort, the fate of our republic will be determined by whether the masses of the peasants will march with the working class and loyally maintain their alliance with it, or whether they will permit the "Nepmen," *i.e.*, the new bourgeoisie, to drive a wedge between them and the working class, to split them off from the working class. The more clearly we see this alternative, the more clearly all our workers and peasants understand it, the more chances are there that we shall avoid a split, which would be fatal for the Soviet Republic.

BETTER FEWER, BUT BETTER

ON the question of improving our state apparatus the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection should not, in my opinion, strive after quantity, and should not hurry. Up to now we have been able to devote so little attention to the quality of our state apparatus that it would be quite legitimate to display special concern for its organisation and to concentrate in the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection human material of real modern quality, *i.e.*, quality not inferior to the best West European models. For a Socialist republic this condition is too modest, of course; but the first five years have fairly crammed our heads with disbelief and scepticism. Involuntarily, we are inclined to display these latter qualities towards those who talk very fine and large about "proletarian" culture, for example. For a start we would be satisfied with real bourgeois culture, for a start we would be satisfied to be able to dispense with the particularly crude types of pre-bourgeois culture, *i.e.*, bureaucratic or serf culture, etc. In matters of culture haste and bustle are the worst possible things. Many of our young writers and Communists should get this well into their heads.

Thus, on the question of the state apparatus we should now draw the conclusion from our past experience that it would be better to go more slowly.

The situation in regard to our state apparatus is so deplorable, not to say outrageous, that we must first of all think very carefully how to eliminate its defects, bearing in mind that the roots of these defects lie in the past, which, although it has been overturned, has not yet been overcome, has not yet passed into a culture of the remote past. I raise the question of culture because in these matters we can regard as achievements only what has been assimilated in culture, in social life, in custom. We can say that what is good in the social system in our country is not thought out,

not grasped, not appreciated, hastily clutched at, untested, not tried by experience, not fixed, etc. Of course, it could not be otherwise in a revolutionary epoch, when development proceeded at such break-neck speed that we passed from tsarism to the Soviet system in five years.

We must come to our senses in time. We must become highly sceptical of too rapid progress, of boastfulness, etc. We must think of testing the steps forward which we proclaim to the world every hour, which we take every minute, and which later prove to be flimsy, superficial and not understood every second. The worst thing of all would be haste. The worst thing of all would be to rely on the assumption that we know anything, or on the assumption that we possess any considerable quantity of the elements necessary for building a really new apparatus that would really deserve the name of Socialist, Soviet, etc.

No, we have no such apparatus, and even the quantity of elements of it that we have is ridiculously small; and we must remember that we must not stint time on building this apparatus, that many many years will be required for it.

What elements have we for building this apparatus? Only two. First, the workers who are absorbed in the struggle for Socialism. These elements are not sufficiently educated. They would like to build a better apparatus for us, but they do not know how to do it. They cannot do it. They have not yet developed the culture that is required for this; and it is precisely culture that is required for this. Here nothing will be achieved by doing things in a rush, by assault, by smartness, or energy, or by any other of the best human qualities in general. Secondly, we have the element of knowledge, education and training, but to a degree that is ridiculously small compared with all other countries.

Here, too, we must not forget that we are too prone to compensate (or imagine that we can compensate) our lack of knowledge by zeal, doing things in a rush, etc.

In order to rebuild our state apparatus we must at all cost set ourselves the task, first, of learning, second, of learning, and third, of learning, and then of testing what we have learnt so that it shall not remain a dead letter, or a fashionable phrase (and, it

is no use concealing it, this often happens among us), so that what we have learnt may become part of our very beings, so that it may actually and fully become a constituent element of our social life. In short, we must not put the demands that are put by the bourgeoisie of Western Europe, but such as are worthy and proper to put to a country which has set itself the task of developing into a Socialist country.

The conclusions to be drawn from the above are the following: we must make the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, which is the instrument for improving our apparatus, a really exemplary institution.

In order that it may achieve the necessary level we must follow the rule: "Measure your cloth seven times before you cut."

For this purpose, the very best of what there is in our social system must be utilised with the greatest caution, thoughtfulness and knowledge in building up the new Commissariat.

For this purpose, the best elements in our social system, such as firstly the advanced workers, and secondly the really enlightened elements, for whom we can vouch that they will not take the word for the deed, and will not utter a single word that goes against their conscience, must not shrink before any difficulties, must not shrink from any struggle, in order to achieve the object they have seriously set themselves.

We have been bustling for five years trying to improve our state apparatus, but it was mere bustle, which during the five years only proved that it was useless, or even futile, or even harmful. This bustle created the impression that we were working; as a matter of fact, it only clogged up our institutions and our brains.

It is time things were changed.

We must follow the rule: "A smaller number, but better quality." We must follow the rule: "It is better to get good human material in two years, or even in three years, than to work in haste without hope of getting any at all."

I know that it will be hard to follow this rule and apply it to our conditions. I know that the opposite rule will force its way through a thousand loopholes. I know that enormous resistance will have to be offered, that devilish persistence will have

to be displayed, that in the first year, at least, the work in this connection will be hellishly hard. Nevertheless, I am convinced that only by such work shall we be able to achieve our aim, and that only by achieving this aim shall we create a republic that is really worthy of the name of Soviet, Socialist, etc.

Probably many readers have thought the figures I gave as an example in my first article¹ to be too small. I am sure that many calculations may be made to prove that they are too small. But I think that we must put one thing above all such and other calculations, *viz.*, the interests of real exemplary quality.

I think that for our state apparatus the time has at last come when we must work on it properly, with all seriousness, and when one of the worst features of this work will be haste. That is why I would utter a strong warning against increasing these figures. On the contrary, in my opinion we must be parsimonious with figures. Let us say frankly that the People's Commissariat for Workers' and Peasants' Inspection does not enjoy a shadow of authority. Everybody knows that a more badly organised institution than our Workers' and Peasants' Inspection does not exist, and that under present conditions nothing can be expected from this Commissariat. We must have this firmly fixed in our minds if we really want to take up the task of creating within a few years an institution that will, firstly, be an exemplary institution, and, secondly, win everybody's absolute confidence, and, thirdly, prove to all and sundry that we have really justified the work of such a high institution as the Central Control Commission. In my opinion, we must utterly and irrevocably reject all general standards for size of staffs. We must make a particularly careful selection of the employees of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and put them to the strictest test. Indeed, what is the use of establishing a People's Commissariat in which the work is carried on anyhow, which does not enjoy the slightest confidence, and whose word enjoys infinitely small authority? I think that our principal task is to avoid this in the work of reconstruction that we now have in mind.

The workers whom we are enlisting as members of the Central Control Commission must be irreproachable Communists, and I

¹ The preceding article.—*Ed.*

think that a great deal has yet to be done to teach them the methods and objects of their work. Furthermore, to assist in this work there must be a definite number of secretaries, who must be put to a treble test before they are allowed to assume their functions. Finally, the officials whom in exceptional cases we shall accept as employees of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection must conform to the following requirements.

First, they must be recommended by several Communists.

Second, they must pass an examination in knowledge of our state apparatus.

Third, they must pass an examination in knowledge of the principles of the theory of our state apparatus, of the principles of the science of administration, of office routine, etc.

Fourth, they must work in such close harmony with the members of the Central Control Commission and their own Secretariat that we can vouch for the work of the whole of this apparatus.

I know that these requirements will call for extraordinarily great efforts, and I am afraid that the majority of the "practical" workers in the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection will say that they are impossible, or will treat them with contempt. But I ask any one of the present leaders of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, or anyone who has any connection with it: Can he conscientiously tell me what are the requirements for a People's Commissariat like the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection? I think the question will help him to acquire a sense of proportion. Either it is not worth while undertaking another of the numerous reorganisations that we have had, and therefore we must give up the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection as hopeless, or we really set to work, by slow, difficult and unusual methods, and testing these methods over and over again, to create something really exemplary, which will win the respect of all and sundry for its merits, and not only because rank and calling demand it.

If we cannot arm ourselves with patience, if we are not prepared to spend several years on this task, we had better not start on it.

In my opinion we ought to select the smallest possible number of the higher institutes of labour, etc., which we have baked so

hastily, see whether they are organised properly, and allow them to continue to function only if they maintain the high level of modern science and give us all its guarantees. If we do that it will not be utopian to hope that within a few years we shall have an institution that will be able to do its work, *viz.*, work systematically and steadily to improve our state apparatus, enjoying the confidence of the working class, of the Russian Communist Party, and of the whole mass of the population of our republic.

The preparatory work for this can be started at once. If the People's Commissariat for Workers' and Peasants' Inspection accepted the present plan of reorganisation it could take the preparatory steps at once and then work systematically until the task is completed, without haste, and not hesitating to alter what has been done if that is necessary.

Any half-hearted solution would be extremely harmful in this case. In essence, any standard of size of staff for the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection that is based on any other consideration would in fact be based on the old bureaucratic considerations, on old prejudices, on what is already condemned, what is universally ridiculed, etc.

In essence, the question stands as follows.

Either we prove now that we have learnt something about state construction (we ought to have learnt something in five years), or we prove that we have not matured for that sufficiently. If the latter is the case, it is not worth while starting on the task.

I think that with the human material we have at our disposal it will not be immodest to assume that we have learnt enough to be able systematically to rebuild at least one People's Commissariat. True, this People's Commissariat will have to be the model for our state apparatus as a whole.

Announce at once a competition for compiling two or more textbooks on the organisation of labour in general, and of the work of administration in particular. We can take as a basis the book already published by Yermansky, although it should be said in parenthesis that he obviously sympathises with Menshevism and is unfitted to compile suitable textbooks for the Soviet government. We

can also take as a basis the book by Kerzhentsev; and some of the other textbooks available may be useful.

Send several trained and conscientious persons to Germany, or to England, to collect literature and to study this question. I mention England in case it is found impossible to send people to America or Canada.

Appoint a commission to draw up the preliminary programme of examinations for candidates for employment in the Workers' and Peasant's Inspection; ditto for candidates for the Central Control Commission.

These and similar measures will not cause any difficulty for the People's Commissar for Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, or his Collegium, or the presidium of the Central Control Commission.

Simultaneously, a preparatory commission should be appointed to select candidates for the Central Control Commission. I hope that we shall now be able to find more than enough candidates for this post among the experienced workers in all departments, as well as among the students of our Soviet universities. It would hardly be right to exclude either of these categories beforehand. Probably preference will have to be given to a mixed composition of this institution, which shall combine many qualities, shall combine various merits. Consequently, the task of drawing up the list of candidates will entail a considerable amount of work. For example, it would be least of all desirable for the new People's Commissariat to be made up of people of one type, say, of people of the type of officials, or if it did not include people of the type of agitators, or people whose principal trait is sociability, or the ability to penetrate into circles into which this type of worker is usually unable to penetrate, etc.

I think I shall be able to express my idea best if I compare my plan with an academic type of institution. Under the guidance of their presidium, the members of the Central Control Commission should systematically examine all the papers and documents of the Political Bureau. At the same time they must properly divide their time on various jobs of investigating the routine in our institutions, from the very small and private to the highest state institutions. And finally, their work will include the study of

theory, i.e., the theory of organisation of the work they intend to devote themselves to, and practical work under the guidance either of older comrades or of teachers in the higher institutes for the organisation of labour.

I do not think, however, that it will be possible to confine oneself to this sort of academic work. In addition, it will be necessary to prepare for work which I would not hesitate to call training to catch—I will not say rogues, but something like that, and inventing special devices to deaden one's footsteps, conceal one's approach, etc.

If such proposals were made in West European institutions they would rouse frightful resentment, a sense of moral indignation, etc.; but I hope that we have not become so bureaucratised as to be capable of that. The N.E.P. has not yet succeeded in winning such respect as to cause one to be offended at the thought that someone may be caught. Our Soviet Republic is of such recent construction, and there are such heaps of lumber lying around, that it would hardly occur to anyone to be offended at the thought that these piles may be delved into by means of cunning devices, by means of investigation sometimes directed to rather remote sources, or by devious routes. And even if it did occur to anyone to be offended by this we may be sure that such a person would become a laughing-stock.

Let us hope that our Workers' and Peasants' Inspection will not suffer from what the French call *pruderie*, which we can call ridiculous primness, or ridiculous swank, and which plays entirely into the hands of our Soviet and Party bureaucracy. Let it be said in parenthesis that we have bureaucrats, not only in the Soviet institutions, but also in the Party institutions.

When I said above that we must study and study hard in the higher institutes for the organisation of labour, etc., I did not mean to imply "studying" in the schoolroom way, or that I confined myself to the idea of studying only in the schoolroom way. I hope that not a single genuine revolutionary will suspect me of refusing, in this case, to understand "studies" to mean resorting to some semi-humorous trick, some cunning device, some piece of trickery, or something of that sort. I know that in the staid and

serious states of Western Europe such an idea would horrify people and that not a single decent official would even entertain it. I hope, however, that we have not yet become sufficiently bureaucratic to be affected in the same way, and that the discussion of this idea will only give rise to amusement among us.

Indeed, why not combine what is pleasant with what is useful? Why not resort to some humorous or semi-humorous trick to expose something ridiculous, something harmful, something semi-ridiculous and semi-harmful, etc.?

I think our Workers' and Peasants' Inspection will gain a great deal if it takes these arguments into consideration, and that the list of devices by which our Central Control Commission and its Collegium in the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection achieved several of their most brilliant victories will be enriched by not a few exploits of our "W.P.I.-ists" and "C.C.C.-ists" in places unmentionable in prim and respectable textbooks.

* * *

How can a Party institution be amalgamated with a Soviet institution? Is there not something improper in this suggestion?

I do not ask these questions on my own behalf, but on behalf of those I hinted at above when I said that we have bureaucrats not only in the Soviet institutions, but also in our Party institutions.

But why, indeed, should we not amalgamate the two if it is in the interests of our work? Have we not all observed that amalgamation of this sort has been very useful in the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, and that it has been practised there from the very beginning? Have we not on the Political Bureau discussed from the Party point of view many questions, both minor and important, concerning the "moves" we should make in reply to the "moves" of foreign powers in order to forestall their, say, cunning, if we are not to use a less respectable term? Is not this flexible amalgamation of a Soviet institution with a Party institution a source of great strength in our politics? I think that what has proved its usefulness, what has been definitely adopted in our foreign politics, and has become so customary that it no longer calls forth any doubt in this field, will be at least as appropriate (I think it will be much

more appropriate) for the whole of our state apparatus. And the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection deals with the whole of our state apparatus, and its activities should affect all and every state institution without exception: local, central, commercial, purely official, educational, archive, theatrical, etc.—in short, all without the slightest exception.

Why then should not an institution whose activities are so wide, and moreover require such extraordinary flexibility of form, be permitted to adopt this peculiar amalgamation of a Party control institution with a Soviet control institution?

I see no obstacles to this. More than that, I think that such an amalgamation is the only guarantee of success in our work. I think that all doubts on this score arise only in the dustiest corners of our state apparatus, and that the only answer they deserve is ridicule.

* * *

Another doubt: is it expedient to combine educational activities with official activities? I think that it is not only expedient, but necessary. Generally speaking, in spite of our revolutionary attitude towards the West European form of state, we have allowed ourselves to become infected with a number of its most harmful and ridiculous prejudices; to some extent we have been deliberately infected with them by our dear bureaucrats, who deliberately calculated on being able to fish in the turbid waters of these prejudices. And they fished in these turbid waters so persistently that only the blind can fail to see how extensively this fishing has been carried on.

In all spheres of social, economic and political relationships we are "frightfully" revolutionary. But in the sphere of precedence, in the observation of the forms and rites of office routine, our "revolutionariness" very often yields to the mustiest routine. Here on more than one occasion we have witnessed the very interesting phenomenon of a great leap forward in social life being accompanied with monstrous hesitancy in the face of the smallest changes.

This is natural, for the boldest steps forward were taken in the sphere that has for long been the field of theory, which has been cultivated mainly, and even almost exclusively, theoretically. The

Russian found consolation for the bleak bureaucratic realities at home in unusually bold theoretical constructions, and that is why these unusually bold theoretical constructions assumed an unusually one-sided character among us. Among us, theoretical audacity in general constructions lived side by side with astonishing timidity in regard to some very minor reform in office routine. A great universal agrarian revolution was worked out with an audacity unprecedented in any other country, and at the same time, the imagination was lacking to work out a tenth-rate reform in office routine; the imagination, or patience, was lacking to apply to this reform the general propositions that produced such "brilliant" results when applied to general problems.

That is why our social life combines within itself an astonishing degree of fearless audacity and mental timidity in the face of very minor changes.

I think that things were no different in any really great revolution, for really great revolutions grow out of the contradictions between the old, between what is directed towards analysing the old, and the abstract striving for the new, which must be so new that not a particle of the old remains.

And the more abrupt the revolution is, the longer will a number of such contradictions last.

* * *

The general feature of our present social life is the following: we have destroyed capitalist industry and have tried to raze to the ground the institution of mediaeval landlordism; in its place we have created a small and very small peasantry, which is following the lead of the proletariat because it believes in the results of its revolutionary work. It is not easy, however, merely with the aid of this confidence, to hold on until the Socialist revolution is victorious in the more developed countries, because, especially under the N.E.P., the small and very small peasantry is compelled by economic necessity to remain on an extremely low level of productivity of labour. Yes, and even the international situation threw Russia back and, taken as a whole, forced the productivity of the labour of the people considerably below the pre-war level.

The West European capitalist states, partly consciously and partly spontaneously, did all that was possible to throw us back, to utilise the elements of civil war in Russia in order to cause as much ruin in the country as possible. It was precisely such a way out of the imperialist war that seemed to hold out many advantages. They argued as follows: "If we fail to overthrow the revolutionary system in Russia, we shall, at all events, hinder her development towards Socialism." And from their point of view they could not argue in any other way. In the end, their problem was half solved. They failed to overthrow the new system that was created by the revolution, but they prevented it from at once taking the step forward that would have justified the forecasts of the Socialists, that would have enabled it to develop the productive forces with enormous speed, to develop all the possibilities that would have merged together and become Socialism, would have proved strikingly and vividly to all and sundry that Socialism contains within itself gigantic forces and that mankind had now entered into a new stage of development which offers extraordinarily brilliant possibilities.

The system of international relationships has now taken the shape in which one of the states of Europe, *viz.*, Germany, has been enslaved by the victor countries. Furthermore, a number of the oldest states in the West are in a position to utilise their victory for the purpose of making a number of insignificant concessions to their oppressed classes, concessions which, insignificant as they are, nevertheless retard the revolutionary movement in those countries and create something which has the appearance of "class peace."

At the same time, precisely as a result of the last imperialist war, a number of countries—the East, India, China, etc.—have been completely dislodged from their groove. Their development has been completely shifted to the general European capitalist lines. The general European ferment has begun to affect them, and it is now clear to the whole world that they have been drawn into a process of development that cannot but lead to a crisis in the whole of world capitalism.

Thus, at the present time we are confronted with the question: shall we be able to hold on with our small and very small peas-

ant production, and in our present state of ruin, until the West European capitalist countries accomplish their development to Socialism? They, however, are not accomplishing it in the way we formerly expected. They are not accomplishing it by the even "ripening" of Socialism, but by the exploitation of some countries by others, by the exploitation of the first of the countries to be vanquished in the imperialist war combined with the exploitation of the whole of the East. On the other hand, precisely as a result of the first imperialist war, the East has been completely drawn into the revolutionary movement, has been completely drawn into the general maelstrom of the world revolutionary movement.

What tactics does this situation prescribe for our country? Obviously the following: We must display extreme caution in order to preserve our workers' government, and to retain our small and very small peasantry under its authority and leadership. We have the advantage in that the whole world is now passing into a movement that must give rise to world Socialist revolution. But we are labouring under the disadvantage that the imperialists have succeeded in splitting the world into two camps; and this split is made more complicated by the fact that it is extremely difficult for Germany, which is really a land of advanced, cultured, capitalist development, to rise to her feet. All the capitalist powers of what is called the West are pecking at her and preventing her from rising to her feet. On the other hand, the whole East, with its hundreds of millions of exploited toilers who have been reduced to the last degree of human endurance, has been forced into such a position that its physical and material strength cannot possibly be compared with the physical, material and military strength of any of the much smaller West European countries.

Can we save ourselves from the impending conflict with these imperialist countries? May we hope that the internal antagonisms and conflicts between the thriving imperialist countries of the West and the thriving imperialist countries of the East will give us a second respite, as was the case when the campaign of the West European counter-revolution in support of the Russian counter-revolution broke down owing to the antagonisms in the camp of the counter-revolutionaries in the West and the East, in the camp

of the Eastern and Western exploiters, in the camp of Japan and America?

I think the reply to this question should be that the answer depends upon too many circumstances, and that, taken as a whole, we can foretell the outcome of the struggle only in as much as, after all is said and done, capitalism itself is educating and training the enormous majority of the population of the globe for the struggle.

In the last analysis, the outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China, etc., constitute the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe. And it is precisely this majority of the population that, during the past few years, has been drawn into the struggle for its emancipation with extraordinary rapidity, so that in this respect there cannot be the slightest shadow of doubt what the final outcome of the world struggle will be. In this sense, the final victory of Socialism is fully and absolutely assured.

But what interests us is not this final victory of Socialism, but the tactics which we, the Russian Communist Party, we, the Russian Soviet government, should pursue in order to prevent the West European counter-revolutionary states from crushing us. In order to ensure our existence until the next military conflict between the counter-revolutionary imperialist West and the revolutionary and nationalist East, between the most civilised countries of the world and the Orientally backward countries, which, however, are the majority, this majority must become civilised. We, too, lack sufficient civilisation to enable us to pass directly to Socialism, although we have the political requisites for this. In order to save ourselves we must adopt the following tactics, or pursue the following policy.

We must strive to build up a state in which the workers retain their leadership of the peasants, retain the confidence of the peasants, and, exercising the greatest economy, remove every trace of superfluity from our social relations.

We must reduce our state apparatus to the utmost degree of economy. We must remove from it all traces of superfluity, of which so much has been left over from tsarist Russia, from its bureaucratic capitalist apparatus.

Will this not be the reign of peasant narrowness?

No, if the working class retains the leadership of the peasantry, we shall be able, by exercising the greatest possible economy in our state, to use every kopek we save to develop our large-scale machine industry, to develop electrification, hydro-peat,¹ to construct Volkhovstroy,² etc.

In this and in this alone lies our hope. Only when we have done that, shall we, speaking figuratively, be able to change horses, from the peasant, muzhik, impoverished horse, from the horse of economy intended for a ruined peasant country, to the horse which the proletariat is seeking and cannot but seek—the horse of large-scale machine industry, electrification, Volkhovstroy, etc.

That is how I link up in my mind the general plan of our work, of our policy, of our tactics, of our strategy, with the tasks of the reorganised Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. This is what, in my opinion, justifies the exceptional care, the exceptional attention which we must devote to the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection in order to raise it to an exceptionally high level, to give it a head with the rights of the Central Committee, etc., etc.

And this justification is that, only by purging our apparatus to the utmost, by cutting out everything that is not absolutely necessary, shall we be certain of holding on. If we do that we shall be able to hold on, not on the level of a small-peasant country, not on the level of this universal narrowness, but on the ever rising level of large-scale machine industry.

These are the lofty tasks that I dream of for our Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. That is why I am planning for it the amalgamation of the most authoritative Party body with an "ordinary" People's Commissariat.

March 2, 1923

¹ The method of extracting peat by means of water.—*Ed.*

² The first big electric power station to be built by the Soviet government, on the River Volkhov, near Leningrad. It was started in 1922 and completed in 1927.—*Ed.*

ON CO-OPERATION

I

I THINK that inadequate attention is being paid to the co-operative movement. Not everyone understands that now, since the October Revolution, and irrespective of the N.E.P. (on the contrary, in this connection we must say, precisely because of the N.E.P.), the co-operative movement acquires absolutely exceptional significance. Much of what was in the dreams of the old co-operators was fantastic. Sometimes they were ridiculously fantastic. But why were they fantastic? Because they did not understand the fundamental, root significance of the political struggle of the working class for the overthrow of the rule of the exploiters. We have accomplished this overthrow, and much that was fantastic, even romantic, and even banal, in the dreams of the old co-operators is now becoming the most unvarnished reality.

Indeed, since state power is in the hands of the working class, since this state power owns all the means of production, the only task that really remains for us to perform is to organise the population in co-operative societies. When the population is organised in co-operative societies to the utmost, the Socialism which formerly was legitimately ridiculed, scorned and treated with contempt by those who were justly convinced of the need for the class struggle, for the struggle for political power, etc., automatically achieves its aims. But not all comrades appreciate the enormous, boundless significance that the organisation of Russia in co-operative societies now acquires. By adopting the N.E.P. we made a concession to the peasant as a trader, a concession to the principle of private trade; it is precisely for this reason that co-operation acquires such enormous significance (which is the very opposite to what some people think). As a matter of fact, the sufficiently wide and deep-going

organisation of the population of Russia in co-operative societies, under the N.E.P., is all that we need, for we have now ascertained the degree to which private interest, the interest of the private trader, state inspection and control of the latter, can be combined and subordinated to the common interest—the problem which formerly was the stumbling block for very many Socialists. As a matter of fact, the power of state over all large-scale means of production, the power of state in the hands of the proletariat, the alliance of this proletariat with the many millions of small and very small peasants, the assured leadership of the peasantry by the proletariat, etc.; is not this all that is necessary in order from the co-operatives—from the co-operatives alone, which we formerly treated as huckstering, and which, from a certain aspect, we have the right to treat as such now, under the N.E.P.—is not this all that is necessary in order to build complete Socialist society? This is not yet the building of Socialist society, but it is all that is necessary and sufficient for this building.

It is this that is underestimated by many of our practical workers. Our co-operatives are looked down upon with contempt, but those who do so fail to understand the exceptional significance of our co-operatives, first, from the aspect of principle (the means of production are owned by the state), and second, from the aspect of the transition to the new order by means that will be *simplest, easiest and most intelligible for the peasantry*.

But this again is the most important thing. It is one thing to draw up fantastic plans for building Socialism by means of all sorts of workers' associations; but it is quite another thing to learn to build it practically, in such a way that *every* small peasant may take part in the work of construction. This is the stage we have reached now. And there is no doubt that, having reached it, we make too little use of it.

We went too far in introducing the N.E.P., not in that we attached too much importance to the principle of free industry and trade; we went too far in introducing the N.E.P. in that we forgot to think about the co-operatives, in that we now underestimate the co-operatives, in that we have already begun to forget the enor-

mous significance of the co-operatives from the two aspects mentioned above.

I now propose to discuss with the reader what can and should now be done practically on the basis of this "co-operative" principle. By what means can we, and should we, start at once to develop this "co-operative" principle so that its Socialist meaning may be clear to all?

Politically we must place the co-operatives in the position of always enjoying not only privileges in general; these privileges must be purely material privileges (bank rate, etc.). The co-operatives must be granted loans which, if not large, shall exceed the loans we grant to the private entrepreneurs, even those engaged in heavy industry, etc.

Every social system arises with the financial assistance of a definite class. There is no need to mention the hundreds and hundreds of millions of rubles which the birth of "free" capitalism cost. Now we must realise, and apply in our practical work, the fact that the social system which we must now assist more than usual is the co-operative system. But it must be assisted in the real sense of the word, *i.e.*, it will not be enough to interpret assistance to mean assistance for any sort of co-operative trade; by assistance we must mean assistance for co-operative trade in which *real masses of the population really take part*. To give a bonus to the peasant who takes part in co-operative trade is certainly a correct formula; but the whole point of the question is to verify this participation, to verify the intelligence behind it, to verify its quality. Strictly speaking, when a co-operator goes to a village and opens a co-operative store, the people take no part in this whatever; but at the same time, guided by their own interests, the people will hasten to try to take part in it.

There is another aspect of the question. There is very little that we still have to do from the point of view of the "civilised" (first of all, literate) European in order to induce absolutely everyone to take not a passive, but an active part in co-operative operations. Properly speaking, there is "*only*" one more thing that we have to do, and that is, to make our population so "civilised" as to understand the advantages of the whole population taking part in

the work of the co-operatives, and to organise this participation. "Only" this. We need no other devices to enable us to pass to Socialism. But in order to achieve this "only," a complete revolution is needed, a whole period of cultural development for the whole mass of the people. Hence, our rule should be: as little philosophising and as few clever tricks as possible. In this respect the N.E.P. is a mark of progress in that it is adapted to the level of the most ordinary peasant, in that it does not demand anything higher of him. But in order to get the whole population to take part in the work of the co-operatives through the N.E.P., a whole historical epoch is needed. At best we can achieve this in one or two decades. Nevertheless, this will be a special historical epoch, and without this historical epoch, without universal literacy, without a proper degree of efficiency, without sufficiently training the population to acquire the habit of reading books, and without the material basis for this, without certain safeguards against, say, bad harvests, starvation, etc., we shall not achieve our aim. The whole thing now is to be able to combine the wide revolutionary range of action, the revolutionary enthusiasm which we have displayed sufficiently and crowned with complete success—to be able to combine this with (I am almost ready to say) the ability to be an efficient and literate merchant, which is sufficient to be a good co-operator. By ability to be a merchant I mean the ability to be a cultured merchant. Let those Russians, or simply peasants, who imagine that since they are trading they are able to be merchants, get this well into their heads. It does not follow at all. He is trading, but this is far from the ability to be a cultured merchant. He is now trading in an Asiatic manner; in order to be a merchant one must be able to trade in a European manner. But he is a whole epoch removed from that position.

In conclusion: a number of economic, financial and banking privileges must be granted to the co-operatives—this is the assistance our Socialist state must give to the new principle of organisation of the population. But this only outlines the general features of the task, for the whole content of the practical tasks is not defined, not depicted in detail, *i.e.*, we must seek for the form of the "bonus" we shall give for organising the co-operatives (and the

terms on which we shall give it), the form of bonus by which we shall sufficiently assist the co-operatives, the form of bonus by means of which we shall obtain the civilised co-operator. And a system of civilised co-operators under the social ownership of the means of production, with the class victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, is Socialism.

II

Whenever I wrote about the New Economic Policy I always quoted the article on state capitalism which I wrote in 1918.¹ More than once this has roused doubts in the minds of several young comrades. But their doubts arose mainly in connection with abstract political questions.

It seemed to them that the term state capitalism cannot be applied to the system in which the means of production belong to the working class, and in which the working class holds political power. They failed to observe, however, that I used the term "state capitalism," *first*, in order to establish historical contact between our present position and the position I held in my controversy with the so-called Left Communists; and already at that time I argued that state capitalism would be superior to the contemporary system of economy. It was important for me to show the continuity between ordinary state capitalism and the unusual, even very unusual, state capitalism to which I referred in leading the reader up to the New Economic Policy. *Secondly*, I always attached importance to the practical aim. And the practical aim of our New Economic Policy was to grant concessions. Undoubtedly, under our conditions, concessions would have been a pure type of state capitalism. That is how I conceived the argument about state capitalism.

But there is another aspect of the matter for which we may need state capitalism, or at least, something parallel with it. That is the question of co-operation.

There is no doubt that under the capitalist state the co-operatives are collective capitalist institutions. Nor is there any doubt that under our present economic conditions, when we combine pri-

¹ "Left-Wing' Childishness and Petty-Bourgeois Mentality," *Selected Works*, Vol. VII.—Ed.

vate capitalist enterprises—but situated on public land and controlled by the state power which is in the hands of the working class—with enterprises of a consistently Socialist type (the means of production, the land on which the enterprises are situated, and the enterprises as a whole, belonging to the state), the question of a third type of enterprise arises which formerly was not independent from the point of view of principle, *viz.*, co-operative enterprises. Under private capitalism, co-operative enterprises differ from capitalist enterprises as collective enterprises differ from private enterprises. Under state capitalism, co-operative enterprises differ from state capitalist enterprises, firstly, because they are private enterprises, and secondly, because they are collective enterprises. Under our system, co-operative enterprises differ from private capitalist enterprises because they are collective enterprises, but they do not differ from Socialist enterprises if the land on which they are situated and the means of production belong to the state, *i.e.*, the working class.

It is this circumstance that is not taken into consideration sufficiently when co-operation is discussed. It is forgotten that owing to the special features of our state system, our co-operatives acquire an altogether exceptional significance. If we exclude concessions, which, incidentally, have not been developed to any considerable extent in our country, co-operation, under our conditions, very often entirely coincides with Socialism.

I will explain this idea. Why were the plans of the old co-operators, from Robert Owen onwards, fantastic? Because they dreamt of peacefully transforming present-day society into Socialism without taking into account a fundamental question like the question of the class struggle, of the working class winning political power, of overthrowing the rule of the exploiting class. That is why we are right in regarding this “co-operative” Socialism as being entirely fantastic, and the dream of being able to transform the class enemies into class colleagues and the class struggle into class peace (so-called civil peace), merely by organising the population in co-operative societies, as something romantic and even banal.

Undoubtedly we were right from the point of view of the

fundamental task of the day, for Socialism cannot be established without the class struggle for political power in the state.

But see how things have changed since political power is in the hands of the working class, since the political power of the exploiters is overthrown, and since all the means of production (except those which the workers' state voluntarily gives to the exploiters for a time, conditionally, in the form of concessions) are owned by the working class.

Now we are right in saying that for us, the mere growth of co-operation (with the "slight" exception mentioned above) is identical with the growth of Socialism, and at the same time we must admit that a radical change has taken place in our point of view concerning Socialism. This radical change lies in that formerly we placed, and had to place, the main weight of emphasis on the political struggle, on revolution, on winning power, etc. Now we have to shift the weight of emphasis to peaceful, organisational, "cultural" work. I would be prepared to say that the weight of emphasis should be placed on educational work were it not for our international relations, were it not for the fact that we have to fight for our position on a world scale. If we leave that aside, however, and confine ourselves entirely to internal, economic relations, the weight of emphasis in our work is certainly shifted to educational work.

Two main tasks confront us which constitute the epoch: the first is to reconstruct our apparatus, which is utterly useless, and which we took over in its entirety from the preceding epoch; during the five years of struggle we did not, and could not, make any serious alterations in it. The second is to conduct educational work among the peasants. And the economic object of this educational work among the peasants is to organise them in co-operative societies. If the whole of the peasantry were organised in co-operatives, we would be standing firmly with both feet on the soil of Socialism. But the organisation of the entire peasantry in co-operative societies assumes such a standard of culture among the peasants (precisely among the peasants as the overwhelming majority of the population) that this entire reorganisation in co-operatives is impossible without a whole cultural revolution.

Our opponents have told us more than once that we are under-

taking the rash task of implanting Socialism in an insufficiently cultured country. But they were misled by the fact that we did not start from the end that was assumed in theory (the theory of all sorts of pedants), and that in our country the political and social revolution preceded the cultural revolution, the cultural revolution which now confronts us.

This cultural revolution would be sufficient to transform us into a completely Socialist country; but this cultural revolution confronts us with immense difficulties of a purely educational (for we are illiterate) and material character (for in order to be cultured we must have reached a certain level of development of the material means of production, we must have a certain material base).

January 4-6, 1923

PART IV
SOCIALIST LABOUR

HOW TO ORGANISE COMPETITION?

BOURGEOIS writers have been writing reams in praise of competition, private enterprise, and all the other magnificent glories and charms of the capitalists and of the capitalist system. Socialists were accused of refusing to understand the importance of these glories, and of ignoring "human nature." As a matter of fact, capitalism long ago abolished small, independent commodity production, under which competition could develop enterprise, energy, and bold initiative to some *considerable* extent, and substituted for it large and very large-scale factory production, joint stock companies, syndicates and other monopolies. Under the *latter* form of capitalism, competition means the incredibly brutal suppression of the enterprise, energy and bold initiative of the *masses* of the population, the overwhelming majority, ninety-nine out of every hundred of the toilers; it also means that competition is superseded by financial fraud, despotism, servility on the upper rungs of the social ladder.

Socialism does not extinguish competition; on the contrary, it for the first time creates the opportunity for employing it on a really *wide* and on a really *mass* scale, for drawing actually the majority of the population into an arena of labour in which they can display their abilities, reveal their talents, which are an untapped spring among the people, and which capitalism crushed, suppressed and strangled in thousands and millions.

Now that a Socialist government is in power our task is to organise competition.

The hangers-on and spongers on the bourgeoisie described Socialism as a uniform, routine, monotonous and drab barrack system. The lackeys of the money-bags, the lickspittles of the exploiters—Messieurs the bourgeois intellectuals—used Socialism as a bogey to "frighten" the people, who, precisely under capitalism,

were doomed to penal servitude and the barracks, to arduous, monotonous toil, to a life of poverty and semi-starvation. The first step towards the emancipation of the people from this penal servitude is the confiscation of the land of the landlords, the introduction of workers' control of industry and the nationalisation of the banks. The next steps are the nationalisation of the factories and works, the compulsory organisation of the whole population in consumers' co-operative societies, which are at the same time co-operative societies for the sale of products, and the state monopoly of the sale of grain and other articles of necessity. Only now is the opportunity created for the truly mass display of enterprise, competition and bold initiative. Every factory from which the capitalist has been expelled, or in which he has at least been curbed by genuine workers' control, every village from which the landlord exploiter has been expelled and his land confiscated, is now, and has only now become, a field in which the working man can reveal his talent, unbend his back, straighten himself, and feel that he is a human being. For the first time after centuries of working for others, of working in subjection for the exploiter, it has become possible to *work for oneself*, and moreover to employ all the achievements of modern technique and culture in one's work.

Of course, this greatest change in human history from working in subjection to working for oneself cannot take place without friction, difficulties, conflicts and violence against the confirmed idlers and their hangers-on. No worker has any illusions on that score. Hardened by many long years of penal servitude for the exploiters, by the exploiters' insults and mockery, and by want, the workers and poor peasants know that time is needed to *break* the resistance of the exploiters. The workers and peasants are not in the least affected by the sentimental illusions of Messieurs the intellectuals, of the whole crowd of *Novaya Zhizn*-ist and other jelly-fish who "shouted" against the capitalists until they were hoarse, "gesticulated" against them and "denounced" them, only to burst into tears and to behave like whipped puppies when it came to *action*, to carrying out threats, to *overthrowing* the capitalists.

The great change from subject labour to working for oneself, to labour planned and organised on a gigantic, national (to a certain

extent international, world) scale requires—in addition to “*military*” measures for the suppression of the resistance of the exploiters—extensive *organisational* measures, organisational effort on the part of the proletariat and the poor peasants. The organisational task is closely interwoven with the task of ruthlessly suppressing by military methods yesterday’s slave-owners (capitalists) and their hordes of lackeys—Messieurs the bourgeois intellectuals. Yesterday’s slave-owners and their servants the intellectuals say and think: “We have always been organisers and chiefs. We have commanded, and we want to continue doing so. We shall refuse to obey the ‘common people,’ the workers and peasants. We shall not submit to them. We shall convert knowledge into a weapon for the defence of the privileges of the money-bags and of the rule of capital over the people.”

That is what the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intellectuals say, think, and do. From the point of view of *self-interest* their conduct is intelligible. The hangers-on and spongers on the feudal landlords—the priests, the scribes, the bureaucrats as Gogol depicted them, and the “intellectuals” who hated Belinsky¹—also found it “hard” to part with serfdom. But the cause of the exploiters and of their intellectual menials is hopeless. The workers and peasants are breaking their resistance—unfortunately, not yet firmly, resolutely and ruthlessly enough—but *they will break it*.

“They” think that the “common people,” the “common” worker and poor peasant, will be unable to cope with the great, truly heroic, in the world-historical sense of the word, organisational tasks which the Socialist revolution has imposed upon the shoulders of the toilers. The intellectuals who are accustomed to serving the capitalists and the capitalist state say in order to console themselves, “You cannot do without us.” But their insolent calculations will fall to the ground: already educated people are coming over to the side of the people, to the side of the toilers, and are helping to break the resistance of the servants of capital. There is a great deal of organising talent among the peasants and the working class,

¹ A celebrated Russian radical literary critic of the first half of the nineteenth century. A severe critic of the system of serfdom then prevailing in Russia.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

and this talent is only just beginning to reveal itself, to awaken, to stretch out towards the great living creative work, to undertake to build Socialist society independently.

One of the most important tasks today, if not the most important task, is to develop the independent initiative of the workers, and of all the toilers and exploited generally, as widely as possible in creative *organisational work*. At all costs we must break the old, *absurd*, savage, despicable and disgusting prejudice that only the so-called "upper classes," only the rich, and those who have gone through the school of the rich, can administer the state and direct the organisational construction of Socialist society.

This is a prejudice. It is fostered by decaying routine, by conservativeness, slavish habits, and still more by the sordid selfishness of the capitalists in whose interest it is to administer while plundering and to plunder while administering. No. The workers will not forget for a moment that they need the power of knowledge. The extraordinary striving after knowledge which the workers reveal, particularly now, shows that mistaken ideas about this do not and cannot exist in the minds of the proletariat. But every *rank-and-file* worker and peasant who is able to read and write, who can judge people and has practical experience, can do organisational work. Among the "common people," of whom the bourgeois intellectuals speak with such scorn and contempt, there are *masses* of people like that. This sort of talent among the working class and the peasantry is still a rich and untapped spring.

The workers and peasants are still "shy," they have not yet become accustomed to the idea that *they* are the *ruling* class now; they are not yet sufficiently resolute. The revolution could not at *one stroke* create these qualities in millions and millions of people who all their lives had been compelled by hunger and want to work under the threat of the stick. But the strength, the virility, the invincibility of the October Revolution of 1917 lie in that it *awakens* these qualities, breaks down the old impediments, tears off the obsolete shackles, and leads the toilers on to the road of *independent* creation of a new life.

Accounting and control—this is the *main* economic task of every Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. of

every consumers' society, of every union or committee of supplies, of every trade union factory committee, or organ of workers' control in general.

The fight against the old habit of regarding the measure of labour, the means of production, from the point of view of the man in subjection, *i.e.*, the habit of shirking burdens, of trying to get as much as possible out of the *bourgeoisie*—this fight must be waged. The advanced, class conscious workers have already started this fight, and they are offering determined resistance to the many newcomers who came into factory life during the war and who now want to treat the *people's* factory, the factory that has come into the possession of the people, in the old way, with the sole end in view of "making" as much as possible and clearing out. All the class conscious, honest and thoughtful peasants and toilers will take their places in this fight by the side of the advanced workers.

Accounting and control, *if* it is carried on by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies as the supreme state power, or on the instructions, on the authority, of *this* power—widespread, general, universal accounting and control, the accounting and control of the amount of labour performed and of products distributed, is the *essence* of the Socialist change, since the political rule of the proletariat has been created and ensured.

The accounting and control that is essential for the transition to Socialism can be only mass accounting and control. The voluntary and conscientious co-operation of the *masses* of the workers and peasants in accounting and controlling with revolutionary enthusiasm *the rich, the rogues, the idlers and hooligans* can alone conquer these survivals of accursed capitalist society, this offal of humanity, these hopelessly decayed and atrophied limbs, this contagion, this plague, this sore that Socialism has inherited from capitalism.

Workers and peasants, toilers and exploited! The land, the banks, the factories and works now belong to the whole of the people! You *yourselves* must set to work to take account of and control production and distribution—this is the *only* road to the victory of Socialism, the only guarantee of its victory, the guarantee of vic-

tory over all exploitation, over all poverty and want! For there is enough bread, iron, timber, wool, cotton and flax in Russia to satisfy the needs of all, if only labour and its products are properly distributed, if only the *businesslike, practical* control of this distribution by the whole of the people is established, if only we can conquer the enemies of the people, the rich and their hangers-on, and the rogues, the idlers and the hooligans, *not only* in politics, but also in *everyday economic* life.

No mercy to these enemies of the people, the enemies of Socialism, the enemies of the toilers! War to the death on the rich and their hangers-on, the bourgeois intellectuals; war on the rogues, the idlers and hooligans! Both, the former and the latter, are of the same brood, the spawn of capitalism, the offspring of aristocratic and bourgeois society; the society in which a handful of men robbed and insulted the people; the society in which poverty and want forced thousands and thousands on to the path of hooliganism, corruption and roguery, and caused them to lose all resemblance to human beings; the society which inevitably cultivated in the toiler the desire to escape exploitation even by means of deception, to escape, if only for a moment, from barren toil, to procure at least a crust of bread by any possible means, no matter how, so as not to starve, so as to subdue the pangs of hunger suffered by himself and by his near and dear ones.

The rich and the rogues are two sides of the same medal, they are the two principal categories of *parasites* which capitalism fostered; they are the principal enemies of Socialism. These enemies must be placed under the special surveillance of the whole of the people; they must be ruthlessly punished for the slightest violation of the laws and regulations of Socialist society. Weakness, hesitation or sentimentality in this respect would be a great crime against Socialism.

In order to make these parasites harmless to Socialist society we must organise the accounting and control of labour, production and distribution, to be carried out by the whole of the people, by millions and millions of workers and peasants, voluntarily, energetically and with revolutionary enthusiasm. And in order to organise this accounting and control so that every honest, intelligent and

efficient worker and peasant may be able to perform it, so that it may be within their powers, we must rouse their organising talent, the talent which is in their midst; we must rouse among them—and organise on a nation-wide scale—*competition* to achieve the greatest organisational successes; the workers and peasants must be able to see clearly the difference between the necessary advice of an educated man and the necessary control by the “simple” worker and peasant of the *lackadaisicalness* that is so habitual among the “educated.”

This lackadaisicalness, carelessness, slovenliness, untidiness, nervous haste, the inclination to substitute discussion for action, talk for work, the inclination to undertake everything under the sun without finishing anything is one of the characteristics of the “educated”; and this is not due to the fact that they are bad by nature, still less is it due to malice; it is due to their habits of life, the conditions of their work, to fatigue, to the abnormal separation of mental from manual labour, and so on and so forth.

Of the mistakes, defects and omissions of our revolution a by no means unimportant role is played by the mistakes, and so forth, due to these deplorable—but at present inevitable—characteristics of the intellectuals in our midst, and to the *lack* of sufficient supervision by the *workers* of the *organisational* work of these intellectuals.

The workers and peasants are still “shy”; they must get rid of this shyness, and they *certainly will* get rid of it. We cannot dispense with the advice, the instruction of educated people, of intellectuals and specialists. Every sensible worker and peasant understands the superiority of the latter in this respect, and the intellectuals in our midst cannot complain of a lack of attention and of comradely respect on the part of the workers and peasants. But advice and instruction is one thing, the organisation of *practical* accounting and control is another thing. Very often the intellectuals give excellent advice and instruction, but they prove to be ridiculously, *absurdly*, shamefully “unhandy” and incapable of *carrying out* this advice and instruction, of *practically* carrying out accounting and control, of transforming words into deeds.

That is why it is utterly impossible to *dispense with the leading*

role of the practical organisers from among the "people," from among the workers and toiling peasants. "It is not the gods who make pots"—this is the motto that the workers and peasants should get well drilled into their minds. They must understand that the whole thing now is *practice*, that the historical moment has arrived when theory is being transformed into practice, is vitalised by practice, corrected by practice, tested by practice, when the words of Marx "Every step in the practical movement is more important than a dozen programmes" become particularly true—every step in practically, really curbing, restricting, fully registering and supervising the rich and the rogues is worth a dozen excellent arguments about Socialism. For "theory, my friend, is grey, but green is the eternal tree of life."

Competition must be organised between the practical organisers among the workers and peasants. Every attempt to adhere to stereotyped forms and to impose uniformity from above, as our intellectuals are inclined to do, must be combated. Stereotyped forms and uniformity imposed from above have nothing in common with democratic and Socialist centralism. The unity of essentials, of fundamentals, of the essence, is not disturbed but ensured by *variety* in details, in specific local features, in methods of *approach*, in *methods* of exercising control, in *ways* of exterminating and rendering harmless the parasites (the rich and the rogues, the slovenly and hysterical intellectuals, etc., etc.).

The Paris Commune gave a great example of how to combine initiative, independence, freedom of action and vigour from below with voluntary centralism free from stereotyped forms. Our Soviets are following this example. But they are still "shy," they have not yet got into their stride, have not yet "bitten into" their new, great, creative task of creating the Socialist system. The Soviets must set to work more boldly and display greater initiative. Every "commune," every factory, every village, every consumers' society, every committee of supplies, must *compete* with its neighbours as a practical organiser of accounting and control of labour and distribution. The programme of this accounting and control is simple, clear and intelligible to all; it is: everyone to have bread; everyone to have sound footwear and good clothing; everyone to have warm

dwelling; everyone to work conscientiously; not a single rogue (including those who shirk their work) to be at liberty, all to be kept in prison, or put to compulsory labour of the hardest kind; not a single rich man who violates the laws and regulations of Socialism to be allowed to escape the fate of the rogue, which should, in justice, be the fate of the rich man. "He who does not work, neither shall he eat"—this is the *practical* commandment of Socialism. This is how things should be organised *practically*. These are the *practical* successes our "communes" and our worker and peasant organisers should be proud of. And this applies *particularly* to the organisers among the intellectuals, because they are *too much, far too much* in the habit of being proud of their general instructions.

Thousands of forms and methods of accounting and controlling the rich, the rogues and the idlers should be devised and put to practical test by the communes themselves, by small units in town and country. There variety is a guarantee of virility, a guarantee of success in achieving the common aim, *viz.*, to *purge* the land of Russia of all vermin, of fleas—the rogues, of bugs—the rich, and so on and so forth. In one place half a score of rich, a dozen rogues, half a dozen workers who shirk their work (in the hooligan manner in which many compositors in Petrograd, particularly in the Party printing offices, shirk their work) will be put in prison. In another place they will be put to cleaning latrines. In a third place they will be provided with "yellow tickets"¹ after they have served their time, so that all the people shall have these *pernicious* people under their surveillance until they reform. In a fourth place, one out of every ten idlers will be shot on the spot. In a fifth place mixed methods may be adopted, and by conditional release,² for example, the rich, the bourgeois intellectuals, the rogues and hooligans will be given an opportunity to reform quickly. The greater variety there will be, the better and richer will be our general experience, the more certain and rapid will be the

¹ After the style of the special passports, yellow in colour, that prostitutes were obliged to carry under the tsarist regime.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

² *I.e.*, release on probation before expiration of sentence.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

success of Socialism, and the easier will it be for practice to devise—and only practice will devise—the *best* methods and means of struggle.

In what commune, in what district of a large town, in what factory and in what village are there *no* starving people, *no* unemployed, *no* idle rich, *no* scoundrelly lackeys of the bourgeoisie, saboteurs who call themselves intellectuals? Where has most been done to raise the productivity of labour, to build good new houses for the poor, to put the poor in the houses of the rich, to regularly provide a bottle of milk for every child of every poor family? It is on these points that *competition* should be organised between the communes, communities, producers'-consumers' societies and associations, and Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. This is the work on which *organising talent* should be singled out *in practice* and rise to the top in the administration of the state. There is a great deal of this talent among the people. It is merely suppressed. It must be given an opportunity to display itself. It, *and it alone*, with the support of the masses, can save Russia and save the cause of Socialism.

January 7-10, 1918 (December 25-28, 1917)

A GREAT BEGINNING

THE HEROISM OF THE WORKERS IN THE REAR. ON "COMMUNIST SUBBOTNIKS" ¹

THE press reports many examples of the heroism of the Red Army men. In the fight against the Kolchakists, Denikinists and other forces of the landlords and capitalists, the workers and peasants very often display miracles of bravery and endurance, defending the gains of the Socialist revolution. The overcoming of guerilla methods, weariness and indiscipline is a slow and difficult process, but it is making headway in spite of everything. The heroism of the toiling masses who are voluntarily making sacrifices for the cause of the victory of Socialism—this is the foundation of the new, comradely discipline in the Red Army, the foundation of its regeneration, consolidation and growth.

The heroism of the workers in the rear is no less worthy of attention. In this connection, the *Communist subbotniks* organised by the workers on their own initiative are positively of enormous significance. Evidently, this is only a beginning, but it is a beginning of unusually great importance. It is the beginning of a revolution that is much more difficult, more material, more radical and more decisive than the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, for it is a victory over personal conservativeness, indiscipline, petty-bourgeois egoism, a victory over the habits that accursed capitalism left as a heritage to the worker and peasant. Only when *this* victory is consolidated will the new social discipline, Socialist discipline, be

¹ From the word "Subbota," meaning Saturday, or the Sabbath. A Subbotnik was voluntary labour performed gratis after ordinary working hours, originally on Saturday. Subsequently the term was applied to similar work performed on the rest day, or on any other day in the week. The work usually consisted of clearing railway tracks, loading or unloading railway cars, helping collective farms, or on construction jobs, such as the Underground Railway in Moscow, which "all Moscow helped to build."—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

created; only then will a reversion to capitalism become impossible and Communism become really invincible.

Pravda in its issue of May 17 published an article by A. J. entitled: "Working in a Revolutionary Way (A Communist Sabbath)." This article is so important that we reproduce it here in full.

"WORKING IN A REVOLUTIONARY WAY

(A Communist Sabbath)

"The letter of the Central Committee of the R.C.P. on working in a *revolutionary way* gave a powerful impetus to the Communist organisations and to the Communists. The general enthusiasm carried many Communist railway workers to the front, but the majority of them could not abandon their responsible posts and had to seek new forms of working in a revolutionary way. Reports from the localities pointing to the tardiness with which the work of mobilisation was proceeding and to the prevalence of red tape compelled the Moscow-Kazan Railway sub-district to turn its attention to the prevailing methods of railway administration. It transpired that owing to the shortage of labour and the tardy rate at which the work was being done urgent orders and repairs to locomotives were being held up. At a general meeting of Communists and sympathisers belonging to the Moscow-Kazan Railway sub-district held on May 7, the question was raised of passing from words to deeds in helping to achieve victory over Kolchak. The following resolution was moved:

"In view of the serious internal and external situation, the Communists and sympathisers, in order to gain the upper hand over the class enemy, must spur themselves on again and deduct an extra hour from their rest, i.e., lengthen their workday by one hour, put these extra hours together and on Saturday perform six continuous extra hours of manual labour for the purpose of creating an immediate material value. Being of the opinion that Communists should not stint their health and life for the gains of the revolution, this work should be performed gratis. *Communist Sabbaths* are to be introduced throughout the sub-district and to continue until complete victory over Kolchak has been achieved."

"After some hesitation, the resolution was adopted unanimously.

"On Saturday, May 10, the Communists and sympathisers turned up to work like soldiers, formed ranks, and without fuss or bustle were taken by the foremen to their various jobs.

"The results of working in a *revolutionary way* are evident. The accompanying table gives the place of work and the character of the work performed.¹

"The total value of the work performed at ordinary rates of pay is R. 5,000; calculated at overtime rates it would be fifty per cent higher.

"The productivity of labour on loading cars was 270 per cent higher than that of ordinary workers. The productivity of labour on other jobs was approximately the same.

"Jobs (urgent) which had been held up for periods ranging from seven

¹ See next page.—Ed.

Place of work	Character of work performed	Number Employed	No. hours worked		Work performed
			Per person	Total	
Moscow. Main locomotive shops	Loading materials for the line, jigs and fixtures for repairing locomotives and car parts for Perovo, Murom, Alaty and Syzran	48	5	240	Loaded 7,500 poods. Unloaded 1,800 poods
		21	3	63	
		5	4	20	
Moscow. Passenger depot	Complex current repairs to locomotive of Trotsky's and other trains	26	5	130	Repairs done on 1½ locomotives
Moscow. Sorting station	Current repairs to locomotives	24	6	144	2 locomotives completed and parts to be repaired dismantled on 4
Moscow. Car department	Current repairs to passenger cars	12	6	72	2 third class cars
Perovo. Main car workshops	Car repairs and minor repairs on Saturday and Sunday	46	5	230	12 box cars and 2 flat cars
		23	5	115	
	Total . . .	205	—	1,014	4 locomotives and 16 cars completed and 9,300 poods loaded and unloaded

days to three months owing to the shortage of labour and to red tape were put through.

"The work was performed in spite of the state of disrepair (easily remedied) of accessories, as a result of which certain groups were held up from thirty to forty minutes.

"The foremen who were placed in charge of the work could not keep pace with the men in finding new jobs for them, and perhaps it was only a slight exaggeration when an old foreman said that as much work was done at this *Communist Sabbath* as would have been done in a week by non-class-conscious and slack workers.

"In view of the fact that many non-Communists, sincere supporters of the Soviet government, took part in the work, and that many more are expected next Saturday, and also in view of the fact that many other districts desire to follow the example of the Communist railway workers of the Moscow-Kazan Railway, I shall deal in greater detail with the organisational side of the matter based on reports received from the locals.

"Of those taking part in the work, ten per cent were Communists permanently employed in the locals. The rest were persons occupying responsible posts, and also elected persons, from the commissar of the railway to commissars of separate enterprises, representatives of the trade union, and employees of the Commissariat for Railways.

"The enthusiasm and good will displayed during work were extraordinary. When, without swearing or arguments, workers and office employees caught hold of a forty-pood wheel tyre of a passenger locomotive and, like industrious ants, rolled it to its place, one's heart was filled with joy at the sight of this collective effort, one's conviction that the victory of the working class was unshakable was strengthened. The world pirates will not strangle the victorious workers; the internal saboteurs will never see Kolchak.

"When the work was finished those present witnessed an unprecedented scene: hundreds of Communists, weary, but with the light of joy in their eyes, greeted the successful results achieved with the triumphant strains of the 'Internationale.' And it seemed as if the all-conquering strains of the all-conquering hymn were being wafted over the walls through the whole of working class Moscow and that like the ripples caused by a stone thrown into a pool they would spread in an ever extending circle through the whole of working class Russia and stimulate the weary and the slack.

"A. J."

Summing up this remarkable "example worthy of emulation," Comrade N. R. in an article in *Pravda* of May 20, under that heading, wrote:

"Cases of Communists working like this are not rare. I know of cases like this in an electric power station, and on various railways. On the Nikolayevsky Railway, the Communists worked overtime several nights to raise a locomotive that had fallen into the repair pit. In the winter, all the Communists and sympathisers on the Northern Railway worked several Sundays clearing the track of snow; and the Communist nuclei at many goods stations guard the stations at night to prevent the stealing of goods. But all this work was casual and unsystematic. The new thing introduced by the comrades on the Moscow-Kazan line is that they are making this work systematic and permanent. The Moscow-Kazan comrades say in their resolution, "until complete victory over Kolchak has been achieved," and therein lies the significance of their work. They are lengthening the workday of every Communist and sympathiser by

one hour for the whole duration of the war; simultaneously, they are displaying exemplary productivity of labour.

"This example has called forth, and *should* call forth, further emulation. A general meeting of the Communists and sympathisers on the Alexandrovsky Railway, after discussing the military situation and the resolution adopted by the comrades on the Moscow-Kazan Railway, resolved: 1) to introduce 'subbotniks' for the Communists and sympathisers on the Alexandrovsky Railway, the first subbotnik to take place on May 17; 2) to organise the Communists and sympathisers in exemplary brigades which must show the workers how to work and what can really be done with the present materials and tools, and in the present food situation.

"The Moscow-Kazan comrades say that their example has created a great impression and that they expect a large number of *non-party workers* to turn up next Saturday. At the time these lines are being written the Communists have not yet started working overtime in the Alexandrovsky workshops, but as soon as the rumour got around that they were to do so the masses of the non-party workers bestirred themselves and said: 'We did not know yesterday, otherwise we would have got ready and would have worked as well!' 'We shall certainly come next Saturday,' we hear on all sides. The impression created by work of this sort is very great.

"The example set by the Moscow-Kazan comrades should be emulated by all the Communist nuclei in the rear; not only the Communist nuclei in the Moscow Junction, but the whole Party organisation in Russia. In the rural districts also, the Communist nuclei should primarily set to work to till the fields of Red Army men and help their families.

"The comrades on the Moscow-Kazan line finished their first Communist subbotnik by singing the 'Internationale.' If the Communist organisations throughout Russia follow this example and consistently apply it, the Russian Soviet Republic will successfully pass through the coming severe months amidst the strains of the 'Internationale' sung by all the toilers of the republic. . . .

"To work, comrades Communists!"

On May 23, 1919, *Pravda* reported the following:

"The first Communist subbotnik on the Alexandrovsky Railway took place on May 17. In accordance with a resolution adopted by their general meeting, ninety-eight Communists and sympathisers worked five hours overtime gratis; the only thing they got was the right to purchase a second dinner, and as manual labourers, they got half a pound of bread with their dinner, for which they also paid."

Although the work was poorly prepared and organised the productivity of labour was twice and three times as great as usual.

Here are a few examples.

Five turners turned eighty spindles in four hours. The rate of output is 213 per cent of the ordinary.

Twenty labourers in four hours collected scrap materials of a total weight of 600 poods, and seventy laminated car springs, each

weighing $3\frac{1}{2}$ poods, making a total of 850 poods. Productivity, 300 per cent of the ordinary.

"The comrades explain this by the fact that in ordinary times their work is dull and uninteresting, whereas here they worked with a will and with enthusiasm. Now, however, they will be ashamed to turn out less work in ordinary times than they did at the Communist subbotnik.

"Now many non-party workers say that they would like to take part in subbotniks. The locomotive brigades are challenging each other to take locomotives from the 'cemetery,' repair them and set them going during a subbotnik.

"It is reported that similar subbotniks are to be organised on the Vyazma line."

How the work is done at these Communist subbotniks is described by Comrade A. Dyachenko in an article in *Pravda* of June 7, entitled "Notes of a Subbotnik Worker." We quote the main passages from this article.

"It was with great joy that I gathered with my comrades to earn my subbotnik 'standing' on the decision of the railway sub-district of the Party, and for a time, for a few hours, to give my head a rest and my muscles a bit of exercise. . . . We were assigned work in the railway carpenter shop. On arrival we found a number of our people there. We exchanged a little banter for a bit, counted up our forces and found that there were thirty of us. In front of us lay a 'monster,' a steam boiler weighing no less than six or seven hundred poods,¹ and our job was to 'shift' it a distance of a half or a third of a verst,² to its base. We begin to have our doubts. . . . However, we start on the job. Some comrades place wooden rollers under the boiler, attach two ropes to it, and we begin to pull. . . . The boiler did not seem willing to move, but at length it budged. We are delighted. After all, we are only a few. For two weeks this boiler had resisted the efforts of thrice our number of non-Communist workers and it would not budge until we came along. . . . We work for an hour, very hard, all together, our movements kept in unison by the command of our 'ganger,'—'one, two, three,' and the boiler keeps on rolling. Suddenly there is confusion, and a number of our comrades are tumbling on the ground in the funniest fashion. The rope 'betrayed' them. A moment's delay, and a new rope is obtained and fixed in its place. . . . Evening. It is getting dark, but we have yet to overcome a small hillock, and then our work will be done. Our arms are racked, our palms burning, we are hot and are pulling for all we are worth—and the thing goes on. The 'manager' stands round and, somewhat shamed by our success, clutches at the rope. 'Lend a hand, it's time you did!' A Red Army man is watching our labours; in his hands he holds a concertina. What is he thinking? Who are these people? Why should they work on Saturday when everybody is at home? I solve his riddle and say to him: 'Comrade, play us a jolly tune. We are not ordinary officials, we are real Communists. Don't you see how fast the work is going under our

¹ Ten or eleven and a half tons.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

² Five hundred, or three hundred, yards.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

hands? We are not lazy, we are pulling for all we are worth!' In response, the Red Army man carefully put his concertina on the ground and hastened to grab at the rope.

"Suddenly Comrade U. strikes up the opening bars of 'Dubinushka' in an excellent tenor voice and we all pick up the refrain of this labour chanty: 'Eh dubinushka, ukhnem, podyernyem, podyernyem. . . .'

"Unaccustomed to the work, our muscles are weary, our shoulders ache, our backs . . . but tomorrow is free day, our day of rest, and we shall be able to get all the sleep we want. The goal is near, and after a little hesitation our 'monster' rolls almost right up to the base. 'Put some boards under; raise it on the base!'—and let the boiler do the work that has long been expected of it. We go off in a crowd to the 'club room' of the local nucleus. The room is brightly illuminated; the walls are decorated with posters; rifles are stacked around the room. After lustily singing the 'Internationale' we enjoy a glass of tea and 'rum,' and even bread. This treat, given us by the local comrades, was very welcome after our arduous toil. We take a hearty farewell of our comrades and line up. The strains of revolutionary songs echo through the slumbering streets in the silence of the night and our measured tread keeps time with the music. We sing, 'Comrades, the bugles are sounding'; 'Arise ye starvelings from your slumbers,' and other songs of the International and of labour.

"A week has passed. Our arms and shoulders are rested and we are going to another 'subbotnik,' nine versts away this time, to repair railway cars. This is in Perovo. The comrades climb on the roof of an 'American' and melodiously sing the 'Internationale.' The people on the train listen to the singing, evidently in surprise. The wheels begin to knock a measured beat, and those of us who failed to get to the roof cling to the steps of the car pretending to be 'desperate' passengers. The station! We have reached our destination. We pass through a long yard and are joyfully greeted by the commissar, Comrade G.

"There is plenty of work, but few to do it! Only thirty of us, and in six hours we have to do medium repairs to a baker's dozen of cars! There are marked rows of wheels. There are not only empty cars, but also a filled cistern. But never mind, we'll 'get down to it,' comrades!

"Work is going full swing. I and five other comrades are working with hoists. Under pressure of our shoulders and two hoists, and directed by our 'ganger,' these pairs of wheels, weighing from sixty to seventy poods a pair, skip from one set of rails to another in the liveliest possible manner. One pair disappears, another rolls into its place. At last all are in their assigned places, and swiftly we shift the old worn-out junk into a shed. . . . One, two, three—and, raised by a revolving iron hoist, they are dislodged from the rails in a trice. Over there, in the dark, we hear the rapid strokes of hammers; the comrades are working like bees on their 'sick' cars. Some are carpentering, others are painting, still others are covering roofs, to the joy of our comrade the commissar and our own. The smiths also ask for our aid. In a portable smithy a white-hot coupling hook is gleaming; it had been bent owing to careless shunting. It is laid on the anvil, scattering sparks, and, under the experienced direction of the smith, our trusty hammer beats it back into its proper shape. Still red-hot and spitting sparks, we rush it on our shoulders to where it has to go.

¹ An American box car.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

We push it into its socket. A few hammer strokes and it is fixed. We crawl under the car. The coupling system is not as simple as it looks; there are all sorts of contraptions with rivets and springs. . . . Work is in full swing. Night is falling. The torches seem to burn brighter than before. Soon it will be time to knock off. Some of the comrades were taking a 'lean up' against some tyres and 'sipping' hot tea. The May night was somewhat fresh, and the new moon shone beautifully like a gleaming sickle in the sky. All around we hear jests, laughter and healthy humour.

"'Knock off, Comrade G., thirteen cars are enough!'

"But Comrade G. is not satisfied.

"We finish our tea, sing our song of triumph, and march to the exit. . . ."

The movement in favour of organising "Communist subbotniks" is not confined to Moscow. *Pravda* of June 6 reported the following:

"The first Communist subbotnik in Tver took place on May 31. One hundred and twenty-eight Communists worked on the railway. In three and a half hours they loaded and unloaded fourteen cars, repaired three locomotives, cut up ten sazhen¹ of firewood¹ and performed other work. The productivity of labour of the skilled Communist workers was thirteen times above the ordinary."

Again, on June 8 we read in *Pravda*:

"COMMUNIST SUBBOTNIKS"

"Saratov, June 5. In response to the appeal of their Moscow comrades, the Communist railway workers here at a general Party meeting resolved: to work five hours overtime on Saturdays without pay in order to assist the national economy."

* * *

I have given the information about the Communist subbotniks in the fullest and most detailed manner because in this we undoubtedly see one of the most important aspects of Communist construction, to which our press pays insufficient attention, and which all of us have as yet failed to appreciate properly.

Less political fireworks, more attention to the simplest but vital facts of Communist construction, taken from and tested by life—this is the slogan which all of us, our writers, agitators, propagandists, organisers, etc., should repeat unceasingly.

It was natural and inevitable in the first period after the proletarian revolution that we should be engaged more on the main

¹ About seventy feet of logs.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

and fundamental task of overcoming the resistance of the bourgeoisie, of conquering the exploiters, of crushing their conspiracies (like the "slave-owners' conspiracy" to surrender Petrograd, in which all, from the Black Hundreds and Constitutional-Democrats to the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, were involved). But simultaneously with this task, another task comes to the front with equal inevitability and more imperatively as time passes, *viz.*, the more material task of positive, Communist construction, the creation of new economic relations, of a new society.

As I have had occasion to point out more than once, particularly in the speech I delivered at the Meeting of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies on March 12, the dictatorship of the proletariat is not only violence against the exploiters, and not even mainly violence. The economic foundation of this revolutionary violence, the guarantee of its virility and its success is the fact that the proletariat represents and carries out a higher type of social organisation of labour compared with capitalism. This is the essence. This is the source of strength and the guarantee of the inevitable and complete triumph of Communism.

The serf organisation of social labour rested on the discipline of the stick, while the toilers, who were robbed and tyrannised over by a handful of landlords, were extremely ignorant and downtrodden. The capitalist organisation of social labour rested on the discipline of starvation, and, notwithstanding all the progress of bourgeois culture and bourgeois democracy, the vast masses of the toilers in the most advanced, civilised and democratic republics remained an ignorant and downtrodden mass of wage slaves, or oppressed peasants, robbed and tyrannised over by a handful of capitalists. The Communist organisation of social labour, the first step towards which is Socialism, rests, and will do so more and more as time goes on, on the free and conscious discipline of the very toilers who have thrown off the yoke of the landlords and capitalists.

This new discipline does not drop from heaven, nor is it born out of pious wishes; it grows out of the material conditions of large-scale capitalist production, and out of this alone. Without this it is impossible. And the vehicle, or the channel, of these

material conditions is a definite historical class, created, organised, consolidated, trained, educated and hardened by large-scale capitalism. This class is the proletariat.

If we translate the Latin, scientific, historical-philosophical term "dictatorship of the proletariat" into simple language, it means the following.

Only a definite class, namely, the urban and the industrial workers in general, is able to lead the whole mass of toilers and exploited in the struggle for the overthrow of the yoke of capital, in the process of this overthrow, in the struggle for holding and consolidating the victory, in the work of creating the new, Socialist, social system, and in the whole struggle for the complete abolition of classes. (We will observe in parenthesis that the only scientific difference between Socialism and Communism is that the first word implies the first stage of the new society that is arising out of capitalism; the second implies the higher, the next stage.)

The mistake the "Berne," yellow International commits is that its leaders accept the class struggle and the leading role of the proletariat only in words and are afraid to think it out to its logical conclusion, they are afraid of the very conclusion which particularly terrifies the bourgeoisie, and which is absolutely unacceptable to it. They are afraid to admit that the dictatorship of the proletariat is *also* a period of the class struggle, which is inevitable as long as classes exist, and which changes in form, being particularly fierce and particularly peculiar in the first period after the overthrow of capital.

The proletariat does not cease the class struggle after it has captured political power, but continues it until classes are abolished—of course, under other circumstances, in another form and by other means.

What does the "abolition of classes" mean? All those who call themselves Socialists recognise this as the ultimate goal of Socialism, but by no means all ponder over its significance. Classes are large groups of people which differ from each other by the place they occupy in a historically definite system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in laws) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of

labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions and method of acquiring the share of social wealth that they obtain. Classes are groups of people one of which may appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in the definite system of social economy.

Clearly, in order to abolish classes completely, it is not enough to overthrow the exploiters, the landlords and capitalists, not enough to abolish *their* property; it is necessary also to abolish *all* private ownership of the means of production, it is necessary to abolish the distinction between town and country, as well as the distinction between manual workers and brain workers. This is a very long process. In order to achieve it an enormous step forward must be taken in developing the productive forces; it is necessary to overcome the resistance (frequently passive, which is particularly stubborn and particularly difficult to overcome) of the numerous survivals of small production; it is necessary to overcome the enormous force of habit and conservativeness which are connected with these survivals.

The assumption that all "toilers" are equally capable of doing this work would be an empty phrase, or the illusion of an antediluvian, pre-Marxian Socialist; for this ability does not come of itself, but grows historically, and grows *only* out of the material conditions of large-scale capitalist production. The proletariat *alone* possesses this ability at the beginning of the road from capitalism to Socialism. It is capable of fulfilling the gigantic task that lies on this road, first, because it is the strongest and most advanced class in civilised society; second, because in the most developed countries it constitutes the majority of the population, and third, because in backward capitalist countries like Russia, the majority of the population consists of semi-proletarians, *i.e.*, of people who regularly live in a proletarian way part of the year, who regularly eke out their livelihood as wage workers in capitalist enterprises.

Those who try to solve the problem of the transition from capitalism to Socialism on the basis of general phrases about liberty, equality, democracy in general, the equality of labour democracy, etc. (as Kautsky, Martov and other heroes of the Berne

yellow International do), thereby only reveal their petty-bourgeois, philistine natures and slavishly follow in the ideological wake of the bourgeoisie. The correct solution of this problem can be found only by concretely studying the specific relations between the specific class which has captured political power, namely, the proletariat, and the whole of the non-proletarian and also semi-proletarian mass of the toiling population—relations which are not established in fantastically-harmonious “ideal” conditions, but in the real conditions of the furious and many-sided resistance of the bourgeoisie.

The overwhelming majority of the population—and certainly of the toiling population—of any capitalist country, including Russia, has a thousand times experienced on its own back and on that of its kith and kin the yoke of capitalism, the robbery and every sort of tyranny of capitalism. The imperialist war, *i.e.*, the slaughter of ten million people in order to decide whether British or German capital is to attain supremacy in plundering the whole world, intensified, expanded and deepened this experience to an unusual degree and compelled the people to realise it. Hence the inevitable sympathy for the proletariat displayed by the overwhelming majority of the population, particularly by the masses of the toilers; for with heroic audacity, with revolutionary ruthlessness, the proletariat overthrows the yoke of capital, overthrows the exploiters, suppresses their resistance and sheds its blood to lay the road to the creation of the new society in which there will be no room for exploiters.

Great and inevitable as may be the petty-bourgeois waverings and vacillations of the non-proletarian and semi-proletarian masses of the toiling population to the side of bourgeois “order,” under the “wing” of the bourgeoisie, they cannot but recognise the moral and political authority of the proletariat, which not only overthrows the exploiters and suppresses their resistance, but also builds new, higher, social connections, social discipline, the discipline of class conscious and united workers, who know no yoke, who know no authority except that of their own unity, of their own more class conscious, bold, compact, revolutionary and steadfast vanguard.

In order to achieve victory, in order to create and consolidate Socialism, the proletariat must fulfil a twofold or dual task: first,

by its devoted heroism in the revolutionary struggle against capital, to draw in its train the whole mass of the toilers and exploited, to carry them with it, to organise them and lead them in the struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to utterly suppress its resistance. Second, it must lead the whole mass of the toilers and exploited as well as all the petty-bourgeois strata on the road of new economic construction, on the road to the creation of new social ties, a new labour discipline, a new organisation of labour, which shall combine the last word of science and capitalist technique with the mass association of class conscious workers engaged in large-scale Socialist production.

The second task is more difficult than the first, for it cannot possibly be fulfilled by single acts of heroism; it requires the most prolonged, most persistent and most difficult mass heroism and *prosaic, everyday* work. But this task is more material than the first, because, in the last analysis, the new and higher mode of social production, the substitution of large-scale Socialist production for capitalist and petty-bourgeois production, can alone serve as the deepest source of strength for victory over the bourgeoisie and the sole guarantee of the durability and permanence of this victory.

* * *

“Communist subbotniks” are of such enormous historical significance precisely because they display the class conscious and voluntary initiative of the workers in developing the productivity of labour, in adopting the new labour discipline, in creating Socialist conditions of economy and life.

One of the few, in fact it would be more correct to say one of the exceptionally rare, bourgeois democrats of Germany who, after the lessons of 1870-71, went over not to the side of chauvinism or national-liberalism, but to the side of Socialism, J. Jacoby, said that the formation of a single trade union was of greater historical significance than the battle of Sadowa. This is true. The battle of Sadowa decided the question of the supremacy of one of two bourgeois monarchies, the Austrian or the Prussian, in creating a national, German, capitalist state. The formation of a single trade union was a tiny step towards the world victory of the proletariat

over the bourgeoisie. Similarly, we can say that the first Communist subbotnik organised in Moscow on May 10, 1919, by the railway workers of the Moscow-Kazan Railway was of greater historical significance than any of the victories of Hindenburg, or of Foch and the British, in the imperialist war of 1914-18. The victory of the imperialists is the slaughter of millions of workers for the sake of the profits of the Anglo-American and French billionaires; it is the brutality of doomed, overfed and decaying capitalism. The Communist subbotnik organised by the railway workers of the Moscow-Kazan Railway is one of the cells of the new Socialist society which brings to all the peoples of the earth emancipation from the yoke of capitalism and from war.

Messieurs the bourgeoisie and their hangers-on, including the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who are accustomed to regard themselves as the representatives of "public opinion," of course, jeer at the hopes of the Communists, call these hopes "a baobab tree in a mignonette flower-pot," sneer at the insignificant number of subbotniks held compared with the vast number of cases of thieving, idleness, decline of productivity, spoiling of raw materials, spoiling of finished goods, etc. In reply to these gentlemen we say: Had the bourgeois intelligentsia brought their knowledge to the assistance of the toilers instead of giving it to the Russian and foreign capitalists in order to restore their power, the revolution would have proceeded more rapidly and more peacefully. But this is utopia, for the question is decided by the struggle between classes, and the majority of the intellectuals are drawn towards the bourgeoisie. The proletariat is achieving victory, not with the assistance of the intelligentsia, but in spite of its opposition (at least in the majority of cases); it is removing the incorrigible bourgeois intellectuals, transforming, re-educating and subordinating the waverers, and gradually winning a larger and larger section over to its side. Gloating over the difficulties and setbacks of the revolution, sowing panic and preaching the return to the past—these are the weapons and the methods of class struggle employed by the bourgeois intellectuals. The proletariat will not allow itself to be deceived by them.

Taking the essence of the question, has there ever been a case

in history in which the new mode of production took root immediately without a considerable number of setbacks, mistakes and relapses? Not a few survivals of serfdom remained in the Russian countryside half a century after serfdom was abolished. Half a century after the abolition of slavery in America the position of the Negroes is still very often that of semi-slavery. The bourgeois intelligentsia, including the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, are true to themselves in serving capital and in adhering to the absolutely false position—after having reproached us for being utopian before the proletarian revolution—of expecting us to be able to wipe out the traces of the past in a fantastically short space of time!

But we are not utopians and we know the real value of bourgeois "arguments"; we know also that for some time after the revolution traces of the old ethics will inevitably predominate over the young shoots of the new. When the new has just been born the old still remains, and for some time it will be stronger than the new, as is always the case in nature and in social life. Jeering at the feebleness of the young shoots, cheap intellectual sneers and the like are in essence the methods employed by the bourgeoisie in the class struggle against the proletariat, they are the defence of capitalism against Socialism. We must carefully study the feeble young shoots of the new, we must devote the greatest attention to them, do everything to promote their growth and "nurse" them. Some of them will inevitably perish. We cannot be absolutely certain that the "Communist subbotniks" will play a particularly important role. But that is not the point. The point is to foster all and every shoot of the new; and life will select the most virile. If the Japanese scientist, in order to help to find a means of conquering syphilis, had the patience to test six hundred and five substances before he discovered the six hundred and sixth which answered to certain requirements, then those who want to solve a more difficult problem, *i.e.*, to conquer capitalism, must have the perseverance to try hundreds and thousands of new methods, means and weapons of struggle in order to discover the most suitable of them.

The "Communist subbotniks" are so important because they were initiated by workers who do not in the least enjoy exceptional-

ly good conditions, by workers of various trades, and some with no trade at all, unskilled labourers, who are living under *ordinary, i.e., very hard*, conditions. We all know very well the main cause of the decline in the productivity of labour that is observed, not only in Russia, but all over the world: it is ruin and impoverishment, discontent and weariness caused by the imperialist war, sickness and starvation. The latter is first in importance. Starvation---that is the cause. And in order to abolish starvation, the productivity of labour must be raised in agriculture, in transport and in industry. Thus we get a sort of vicious circle: in order to raise the productivity of labour we must save ourselves from starvation, and in order to save ourselves from starvation we must raise the productivity of labour.

It is well known that such contradictions are solved in practice by breaking the vicious circle, by bringing about a change in the mood of the masses, by the heroic initiative of individual groups which, on the background of such a change in the mood of the masses, often plays a decisive role. The unskilled labourers and railway workers of Moscow (of course, we have in mind the majority of them, and not a handful of profiteers, officials and other White Guards) are toilers who are living in desperately hard conditions. They are constantly underfed, and now, before the new harvest is gathered, with the general worsening of the food situation, they are actually starving. And yet these starving workers, surrounded by the malicious counter-revolutionary agitation of the bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, organise "Communist subbotniks," work overtime *without any pay*, and achieve *an enormous increase in productivity of labour* in spite of the fact that they are weary, tormented, exhausted by starvation. Is this not magnificent heroism? Is this not the beginning of a change of world-historic significance?

In the last analysis, productivity of labour is the most important, the principal thing for the victory of the new social system. Capitalism created a productivity of labour unknown under serfdom. Capitalism can be utterly vanquished, and will be utterly vanquished, by the fact that Socialism creates a new and much higher productivity of labour. This is a very difficult matter and

must take a considerable time; but *it has been started*, and that is the main thing. If in starving Moscow, in the summer of 1919, the starving workers who had gone through four hard years of imperialist war and another year and a half of still harder civil war could start this great work, how will it develop later when we conquer in the civil war and win peace?

Communism is the higher productivity of labour—compared with capitalist productivity of labour—of voluntary, class conscious, united workers employing advanced technique. Communist subbotniks are extraordinarily valuable as the *actual* beginning of *Communism*; and this is a very rare thing, because we are in the stage when “only the *first steps* in the transition from capitalism to Communism are being taken” (as our Party programme quite rightly says).

Communism begins when the *rank-and-file workers* begin to display self-sacrificing concern that overcomes all obstacles for increasing the productivity of labour, for husbanding *every pool of grain, coal, iron* and other products, which do not accrue to the workers personally, or to their “close kith and kin,” but to their “remote” kith and kin, *i.e.*, to society as a whole, to tens and hundreds of millions of people, organised first in a single Socialist state, and then in a Union of Soviet Republics.

In *Capital*, Karl Marx ridicules the pompous and grandiloquent bourgeois-democratic great charter of liberty and the rights of man, ridicules all this phrasemongering about liberty, equality and fraternity *in general*, which dazzles the petty bourgeois and philistines of all countries, including the present despicable heroes of the despicable Berne International. Marx contrasts these pompous declarations of rights to the plain, modest, practical, everyday presentation of the question by the proletariat: the legislative enactment of a shorter working day—this is a typical example of the way it presents the question. The aptness and profundity of Marx's observation become the clearer and more obvious to us the more the content of the proletarian revolution unfolds. The “*formulae*” of genuine Communism differ from the pompous, involved, solemn phrasemongering of the Kautskys, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries and their beloved “brethren” of Berne in that they

reduce everything to the *conditions of labour*. Less chatter about "industrial democracy," about "liberty, equality and fraternity," about "government by the people," and all such stuff; the class conscious workers and peasants of our day see the dishonesty of the bourgeois intellectual through these pompous phrases as easily as the ordinary person with common sense and experience, in glancing at the irreproachably "smooth" features and dapper appearance of the "fain fellow, dontcher know," immediately and unerringly puts him down as "in all probability, a scoundrel."

Fewer pompous phrases, more plain, *everyday* work, concern for the pood of grain and the pood of coal! More concern for supplying this pood of grain and pood of coal that the hungry workers and ragged and barefooted peasants need, not by means of *huckstering*, not in a capitalist manner, but by means of the class conscious, voluntary, boundlessly heroic labour of simple toilers like the unskilled labourers and railway workers on the Moscow-Kazan Railway.

We must all admit that traces of the bourgeois-intellectual phrasemongering approach to questions of the revolution are observed at every step, everywhere, even in our ranks. Our press, for example, does not fight sufficiently against these putrid survivals of the decayed, bourgeois-democratic past; it does not render sufficient assistance to the simple, modest, everyday but virile shoots of genuine Communism.

Take the position of women. Not a single democratic party in the world, not even in the most advanced bourgeois republic, has done in tens of years a hundredth part of what we did in the very first year we were in power. In the literal sense of the word, we did not leave a single brick standing of the despicable laws which placed women in a state of inferiority compared with men, of the laws restricting divorce, of the disgusting formalities connected with divorce, of the laws on illegitimate children and on searching for their fathers, etc. To the shame of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism be it said, numerous survivals of these laws exist in all civilised countries. We have a right a thousand times to be proud of what we have done in this sphere. But the more *thoroughly* we clear the ground of the lumber of the old bourgeois laws and in-

stitutions, the clearer it becomes to us that we are only clearing the ground for the new structure; we are not yet building it.

Notwithstanding all the liberating laws that have been passed, woman continues to be a *domestic slave*, because *petty housework* crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and to the nursery, and wastes her labour on barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery. The real *emancipation of women*, real Communism, will begin only when a mass struggle (led by the proletariat which is in power) is started against this petty domestic economy, or rather when it is *transformed on a mass scale* into large-scale Socialist economy.

Do we in practice devote sufficient attention to this question, which, theoretically, is indisputable for every Communist? Of course not. Do we devote sufficient care to the *young shoots* of Communism which have already sprung up in this sphere? Again we must say emphatically, No! Public dining rooms, crèches, kindergartens—these are examples of the shoots, the simple everyday means, which assume nothing pompous, grandiloquent or solemn, but which can *in fact emancipate women*, which can in fact lessen and abolish their inferiority to men in regard to their role in social production and in social life. These means are not new, they (like all the material prerequisites for Socialism) were created by large-scale capitalism; but under capitalism they remained, first, a rarity, and second, and what is particularly important, either *profit-making* enterprises, with all the worst features of speculation, profiteering, cheating and fraud, or the “acrobatics of bourgeois philanthropy,” which the best workers quite rightly hated and despised.

There is no doubt that the number of these institutions in our country has increased enormously and that they are *beginning* to change in character. There is no doubt that there is far more *organising talent* among the working women and peasant women than we are aware of, people who are able to organise in a practical way and enlist large numbers of workers, and a still larger number of consumers, for this purpose without the abundance of phrases, fuss, squabbling and chatter about plans, systems, etc., which our swelled-headed “intelligentsia” or half-baked “Com-

munists" "suffer" from. But we do not *nurse* these new shoots with sufficient care.

Look at the bourgeoisie! How well it is able to advertise what it requires! See how what the capitalists regard as "model" enterprises are praised in millions of copies of *their* newspapers; see how "model" bourgeois enterprises are transformed into objects of national pride! Our press does not take the trouble, or hardly takes the trouble, to describe the best dining rooms or crèches, in order by daily exhortation to secure the transformation of some of them into models. It does not give them enough publicity, does not describe in detail what saving in human labour, what conveniences for the consumer, what a saving in products, what emancipation of women from domestic slavery and what an improvement in sanitary conditions can be achieved with *exemplary Communist labour* for the whole of society, for all the toilers.

Exemplary production, exemplary Communist subbotniks, exemplary care and conscientiousness in procuring and distributing every pood of grain, exemplary dining rooms, exemplary cleanliness in such-and-such a workers' apartment house, in such-and-such a block—all these should receive ten times more attention and care from our press, as well as from *every* workers' and peasants' organisation, than they receive now. All these are the young shoots of Communism; and nursing these shoots should be our common and primary duty. Difficult as our food and production situation may be, we can point to undoubted progress during the year and a half of Bolshevik rule *along the whole front*. Grain collections have increased from 30,000,000 poods (from August 1, 1917, to August 1, 1918) to 100,000,000 poods (from August 1, 1918, to May 1, 1919); vegetable gardening has increased, the margin of unsown land has diminished, railway transport has begun to improve notwithstanding the enormous fuel difficulties, and so on. Against this general background, and with the support of the proletarian state, these young shoots of Communism will not wither; they will grow and blossom into complete Communism.

* * *

We must ponder very deeply over the significance of "Communist subbotniks" in order that we may learn all the very important

practical lessons that are to be learnt from this great beginning.

The first and main lesson is that we must give every kind of assistance to this beginning. The word "commune" is beginning to be used with too great freedom. Every enterprise that is started by Communists, or which they help to start, is very often at once declared to be a "commune," and very often it is forgotten that this *honourable title* must be *won* by prolonged and persistent effort, must be won by *practical* achievement in genuine Communist construction.

That is why, in my opinion, the decision that has matured in the minds of the majority of the members of the Central Executive Committee to *repeal* the decree of the Council of People's Commissars on the *title* of "consumers' communes" is quite right. Let them bear simpler titles, and then the defects and weaknesses of the *first* stages of the new organisational work will not be attributed to the "commune," but (as in all fairness they should be) to the *bad* Communists. It would be a good thing to eliminate the word "commune" from *everyday* use, to prohibit every first comer from snatching at this word, or *allow this title to be borne only* by genuine communes, which have revealed in practice (unanimously confirmed by the whole of the surrounding population) that they are capable of organising in a Communist manner. First show that you are capable of working gratis in the interests of society, in the interests of all the toilers, show that you are capable of "working in a revolutionary way," that you are capable of raising the productivity of labour, of organising in an exemplary manner, and then put out your hand for the honourable title of "commune"!

In this respect, the "Communist subbotniks" are a most valuable exception; for the unskilled labourers and railway workers on the Moscow-Kazan Railway *first* showed by *deeds* that they are capable of working like *Communists*, and then adopted the title of "Communist subbotniks" for their undertaking. We must see to it that in future everyone who calls his enterprise, institution or undertaking a commune *without having set an example* of real Communist organisation, achieved as a result of arduous toil and *practical success in prolonged effort*, shall be made a laughing-stock, and mercilessly pilloried as a charlatan or a windbag.

The great beginning of "Communist subbotniks" must also be utilised for another purpose—for *purging* the Party. It was absolutely inevitable in the first period after the revolution, when the masses of "honest" and philistine-minded people were particularly timorous, and when the whole of the bourgeois intelligentsia, including, of course, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, sabotaged us and cringed before the bourgeoisie, it was absolutely inevitable that adventurers and other pernicious elements should attach themselves to the ruling party. Not a single revolution has been able to avoid that. The whole point is that the ruling party should be able, relying on a sound and strong class, to purge its ranks.

We started on this work long ago. We must continue it steadily and untiringly. The mobilisation of Communists for the war helped us in this respect: the cowards and scoundrels fled from the Party. A good riddance! *Such* a reduction in membership is an *enormous increase* in its strength and weight. We must continue the purging, and utilise the beginning made in "Communist subbotniks" for this purpose, *i.e.*, accept members only after six months', say, "trial," or "probation," in "working in a revolutionary way." All members of the Party who joined after November 7 (October 25), 1917 and who have not proved by some special work or service that they are absolutely reliable, loyal and capable of being Communists, should be put to the same test.

The purging of the Party, owing to the *higher demands* it will make in regard to working in a genuinely Communist way, will improve the state *apparatus*, and will bring ever so much nearer the *final transition* of the peasants to the side of the revolutionary proletariat.

Incidentally, the "Communist subbotniks" have thrown a remarkably strong light on the class character of the state apparatus under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Central Committee drafts a letter on "working in a revolutionary way." The idea is suggested by the Central Committee of a party of 100,000 to 200,000 members (I assume that that is the number that will remain after a thorough purging; at present the membership is larger).

The idea is taken up by the workers organised in trade unions. In Russia and the Ukraine they number about 4,000,000. The over-

whelming majority of them are for the proletarian state, for the proletarian dictatorship. Two hundred thousand and four million: such is the correlation of "cog-wheels," if one may so express it. Then follow the *tens of millions* of peasants, who are split up into three main groups: the most numerous and standing closest to the proletariat—the semi-proletarians or poor peasants; then come the middle peasants, and lastly the numerically very small group of kulaks or rural bourgeoisie.

As long as it is possible to trade in grain and to make profit out of famine, the peasant will remain (and this is inevitable for a certain period of time under the dictatorship of the proletariat) a semi-toiler and semi-profiteer. As a profiteer he is hostile to us, hostile to the proletarian state; he is inclined to agree with the bourgeoisie and their faithful lackeys, up to and including the Menshevik Sher or the Socialist-Revolutionary B. Chernenkov, who stand for freedom to trade in grain. But *as a toiler*, the peasant is a friend of the proletarian state, a loyal ally of the workers in the struggle against the landlord and against the capitalist. As a toiler, the peasant, the vast mass of the peasants, supports the state "machine" which is headed by a Communist, proletarian vanguard a hundred or two hundred thousand strong, and which consists of millions of organised proletarians.

A more democratic state, democratic in the true sense of the word, a state more closely connected with the toiling and exploited masses, has *never existed before*.

It is precisely such proletarian work as is called "Communist subbotniks," the work which is done at these subbotniks, that will serve to win completely the respect and love of the peasantry for the proletarian state. Such work, and only such work, completely convinces the peasant that we are right, that Communism is right, and makes the peasant our loyal ally. And this will lead to the complete overcoming of the food difficulties, to the complete victory of Communism over capitalism on the question of the production and distribution of grain; it will lead to the absolute consolidation of Communism.

FROM THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ANCIENT SOCIAL SYSTEM TO THE CREATION OF THE NEW

OUR newspaper is devoted to the problem of Communist labour.

This is a very important problem of the construction of Socialism. First of all we must be very clear on the point that this problem could only be raised in a practical manner after the proletariat had captured political power, only after the landlords and capitalists had been expropriated, only after the proletariat, which had captured political power, had achieved decisive victories over the exploiters who had organised desperate resistance, counter-revolutionary rebellions and civil war.

In the beginning of 1918 it seemed that that time had arrived, and it did indeed arrive after the February (1918) military campaign of German imperialism against Russia. But that period was so short-lived, the new and more powerful wave of counter-revolutionary rebellions swept over us so quickly, that the Soviet government had no opportunity to devote itself at all closely and persistently to problems of peaceful construction.

Now we have passed through two years of unprecedented and incredible difficulties of famine, privation, and suffering, simultaneously with unprecedented victories of the Red Army over the hordes of the international capitalist reaction.

Now there are serious grounds for hoping (if the French capitalists do not incite Poland to war against us) that we shall get a more durable and longer peace.

During the two years we obtained some experience in construction on the basis of Socialism. That is why we can, and should, come right down to the problem of Communist labour, or rather, it would be more correct to say, not Communist, but Socialist labour; for we are not dealing with the higher, but with the lower,

the primary stage of development of the new social system that is growing out of capitalism.

Communist labour in the narrower and stricter sense of the word is labour performed gratis for the benefit of society, labour performed, not as a definite duty, not for the purpose of obtaining a right to certain products, not according to previously established and legally fixed rates, but voluntary labour, irrespective of rates, labour performed without expectation of reward, without the condition of reward, labour performed out of a habit of working for the common good, and out of a conscious realisation (become a habit) of the necessity of working for the common good—labour as the requirement of a healthy body.

It must be clear to everybody that we, i.e., our society, our social system, are still a very long way from the broad, genuinely mass application of this form of labour.

But the very fact that this problem has been raised by the whole of the advanced proletariat (the Communist Party and the trade unions), and by the state, is a step in this direction.

In order to reach the big thing we must start from the little one.

And on the other hand, after the "big thing," after the revolution which overthrew capitalist private ownership and placed the proletariat in power, the construction of economic life on the *new basis can only start from the little thing*.

Subbotniks, labour armies, labour service—such are the various forms of Socialist and Communist labour.

There are still numerous defects in this. Only those who are totally unable to think, not to speak of the champions of capitalism, can make shift with jeers (or abuse) at them.

Defects, mistakes, blunders in such a new, difficult and great task are inevitable. He who is afraid of the difficulties of building Socialism, he who allows himself to be scared by them, he who drops into despair or cowardly consternation, is no Socialist.

The work of creating a new labour discipline, of creating new forms of social ties between men, of creating new forms and methods of getting people to work, must take many years and decades.

It is work of the noblest and most grateful kind.

It is our good fortune that, after overthrowing the bourgeoisie

and suppressing its resistance, we were able to win for ourselves the ground on which this work has *become possible*.

And we will set to work with all our might. Perseverance, persistence, preparedness, determination and ability to test a thing a hundred times, to alter a thing a hundred times and to achieve the goal, come what may—these are the qualities that the proletariat has acquired in the course of the ten, fifteen, twenty years that preceded the October Revolution, that it acquired in the course of the two years that have followed this revolution, while suffering unprecedented privation, hunger, ruin and destitution. These qualities are the guarantee that the proletariat will conquer.

April 8, 1920

PART V
IMPROVEMENT OF THE STATE APPARATUS AND
COMBATING BUREAUCRACY AND RED TAPE
(From Notes and Letters)

ROUGH DRAFT OF RULES FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF SOVIET INSTITUTIONS

1

THE discussion and decision of all questions of administration in Soviet institutions by collegiums should be accompanied by the establishment of the most precise *responsibility of every person*, no matter what Soviet post he occupies, for *fulfilling definite* and unambiguously defined functions and *practical work*.

Henceforth, this rule, without which it will be impossible to exercise real control over and to select the most suitable people for each office and each task, must be *absolutely obligatory*.

Hence, every Soviet collegium and every Soviet institution without exception must immediately do the following:

First, adopt a decision which shall exactly distribute the work and responsibilities among all members of the collegium or officials.

Second, define in the most precise manner the responsibility of those persons who are performing given tasks, no matter of what kind, but particularly such as concern the speedy and proper collection and distribution of materials and products.

This rule is binding on all Soviet institutions, and is especially obligatory for local, uyezd, urban, etc., Councils of National Economy and Economic Departments of Executive Committees. Such Departments and Councils of National Economy must immediately impose responsibility upon definite persons for the speedy and proper collection of *each* of the raw materials and products needed by the population.

All the leading Soviet institutions, such as Executive Committees, gubernia and city Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, etc., must immediately reorganise their work with a view to placing in the foreground genuine verification of the fulfilment of the decisions of the central authorities and of the local

institutions, while other kinds of work should to the utmost possible degree be transferred to auxiliary committees consisting of a small number of members of the given institution.

2

With a view to combating red tape and more successfully discovering abuses and also exposing and removing dishonest persons who have penetrated Soviet institutions, the following rules are established:

Every Soviet institution must display outside as well as inside its premises, in a manner visible to all without having to obtain passes, notices indicating on what days and at what hours the public may attend. The premises in which people are received must be so arranged as to be freely accessible without any necessity of obtaining passes.

Every Soviet institution shall keep a book for the purpose of entering in the briefest possible form the names of visitors, the nature of their business, and the persons to whom the respective cases have been sent to be dealt with.

The public shall be received also on Sundays and holidays.

Officials of the State Control shall have the right to attend at all times when the public is being received, and it shall be their duty from time to time to attend the institutions when the public is being received, examine the visitors' book and write a report of their attendance, their examination of the book and the questioning of visitors.

The Commissariats for Labour, State Control and Justice shall organise everywhere information bureaux, which shall be freely accessible to all without having to obtain passes and free of charge, and which must also be open on Sundays, the said Commissariats widely to inform the public on what days and at what hours these bureaux are open.

It shall be the duty of these information bureaux, not only to give all information asked for, orally or in writing, but also to draw up free of charge written declarations for persons unable to write or unable to draw up such declarations clearly themselves. It shall be obligatory to enlist for the work of these bureaux repre-

representatives of *all parties* eligible for representation on the Soviets, as well as representatives of parties which are not represented in the government, and also representatives of the non-party trade unions and non-party unions of the intellectuals.

3

The task of defending the Soviet Republic imperatively calls for the greatest economy in forces and the most productive utilisation of the labour of the people.

With these ends in view it is ordered—primarily in regard to all Soviet institutions, and later to be applied to all and every enterprise and collegium—that:

1) Every more or less independent department of every Soviet institution without exception shall within three days present to the local Executive Committee (in Moscow, also to the People's Commissariat of Justice) brief information on the following points: a) name of institution; b) name of department; c) a very brief description of the nature of its work; d) number of sub-departments, divisions of cases, or other divisions, giving a list of names of such; e) number of employees, male and female; f) volume of work, calculated as far as possible, for example, in number of cases, volume of correspondence, or other indices.

Local Executive Committees (in Moscow, the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies in agreement with the People's Commissariat of Justice and the presidium of the Central Executive Committee) must immediately: 1) take measures to verify the proper and timely fulfilment of the above rules and 2) draw up within one week after the aforesaid information has been presented a plan for co-ordinating, uniting and *merging* departments engaged in the same or kindred affairs.

The commissions which the above-mentioned institutions shall charge with this task shall include representatives of the Departments for the Interior, Justice, State Control, and Labour, and the representatives of other departments, if necessary. The commissions must submit to the Council of People's Commissars and the presidium of the Central Executive Committee a brief *weekly* report on what has been done to merge kindred departments and to save labour.

2) In every city in which there are kindred departments or institutions—central, oblast, city, gubernia and uyezd, the highest institution shall immediately set up a commission for the purpose of co-ordinating and amalgamating all these institutions, with a view to introducing the maximum economy of forces, this commission to work according to the rules and schedule indicated in point 1.

3) The same commissions (points 1 and 2) are instructed on the same grounds to take urgent measures to substitute female labour for male labour to the utmost extent and to draw up a list of males who can be transferred to work in the army, or for the army, or to other work of an executive and practical nature other than office work.

4) The same commissions (points 1 and 2) are instructed, in agreement with the local organisations of the R.C.P., to make such alteration in staffs as to leave members of the R.C.P. (of not less than two years' standing) only in leading and most responsible posts; all other posts are to be filled by non-party people, or by members of other parties, in order to release as large a number of members of the R.C.P. as possible for other work.

All organisations of the R.C.P. shall within one week from the date of publication of the present order of the Central Committee of the R.C.P. enter in all membership cards and registration cards *the date* on which the respective members joined the Bolshevik Party.

In the absence of such information, and if it is impossible to obtain same (and have it verified and signed by not less than three members of the R.C.P. of two years' standing and over), such Party cards or registration cards should bear the inscription: "Date of entry unknown."

All members of the R.C.P. who occupy any Soviet post must immediately make a brief entry in their Party cards stating what parties they belonged to, or were associated with, during the past *five* years, such entry to be certified by the chairmen or secretaries of the Party organisations.

**TO ALL MEMBERS OF COLLEGIUMS AND PEOPLE'S COM-
MISSARS OF ALL PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIATS**

HEREWITH find enclosed the pamphlet, *Carry Out the Laws of the Soviet Republic*. In it you will find the *law* passed by the Sixth All-Russian Congress of Soviets, which I want to bring to your notice.

I want to remind you of the absolute necessity of strictly carrying out this law.

Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars,

V. ULYANOV (LENIN)

September 6, 1919

A LETTER TO M. P. TOMSKY ON BUREAUCRACY IN THE TRADE UNIONS

COMRADE TOMSKY,

Please submit the following to the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions and to the Communist fraction of same.

Dear comrades,

I enclose herewith information concerning the astonishing *red tape*, negligence, bureaucracy and incompetence that are displayed in a very important *practical* matter.

I have never doubted that a great deal of bureaucracy still exists in all our Commissariats.

But I did not expect to find *no less* bureaucracy in the trade unions.

This is utterly disgraceful. I earnestly request you to read all these documents at the meeting of the Communist fraction of the A.C.C.T.U. and to draw up *practical* measures for combating bureaucracy, red tape, idleness and incompetence.

Please be good enough to inform me of the results.

Melnichansky *himself* telephoned me about these 10,000 metallists. I made a fuss about it in the People's Commissariat of Ways and Communications, and now Comrade Melnichansky has let me down. . . .

With Communist greetings,

V. ULYANOV (LENIN)

January 16, 1920

A LETTER TO J. V. STALIN ON DRAWING UP REGULATIONS FOR THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' INSPECTION

TO COMRADE STALIN, *copies sent to AVANESOV, TOMSKY and KISELEV, member of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee*

On the basis of the instructions given by the Central Committee I think the three drafts should be worked up into one.

I think the following should be added:

1) The "Department" of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection of the State Control should be a temporary one. Its function should be to introduce the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection in *all* the departments of the State Control, and it should then cease to exist as a separate department.

2) Object: to enlist all the toilers, men, and particularly women, in the work of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection.

3) For this purpose the local authorities should compile lists (according to the constitution), exempt office employees, etc.

—all the rest to take part in the work of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection *in rotation*.

4) Participation in this work should assume various forms in accordance with the abilities of the participants—from the function of "informer," witness, or learner, or pupil, in the case of illiterate and uneducated workers and peasants, to all rights (or nearly all rights) for the literate, the educated, those who have been *tested* in one way or another.

5) To pay special attention to (and to draw up strict rules for)—and the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection to exercise *wider* control over—the accounting of products, *goods*, stores, tools, materials, fuel, etc. etc. (particularly dining rooms, etc.).

Women, all women, should be enlisted for this purpose, without fail.

6) In order to avoid confusion arising from the enlistment of masses of participants, lists indicating the order in which they are to be enlisted should be drawn up. It is also necessary carefully to think out the forms this participation is to assume (two and three at a time; to enlist a larger number of participants only rarely and on special occasions, so as not to distract employees from their work unnecessarily).

7) Detailed instructions should be drawn up.

8) It should be the duty of the officials of the State Control (in accordance with special instructions) first to enlist the co-operation of the representatives (or groups) of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection in all their operations, and second to deliver lectures at *non-party* conferences of workers and peasants (popular lectures according to a specially approved programme, on the principles and methods of the State Control. Instead of lectures they may arrange for the reading of the pamphlet we shall publish—that is, which the State Control, Stalin and Avanesov will publish with the special co-operation of the Party—and the commentaries to it).

9) *Gradually* invite peasants (unfailingly non-party peasants) from the local districts to take part in the work of the State Control in the centre. Start at least with one or two from each gubernia (if it is not possible to start with more) and then *extend* it as transport facilities and other conditions permit. The same to apply to non-party workers.

10) Gradually introduce the verification by the Party and the trade unions of the participation of the toilers in the work of the State Control, *i.e.*, they are to ascertain whether all the toilers participate in this work, and the results of this participation from the point of view of the participants learning the art of state administration.

LENIN

January 24, 1920

**A LETTER TO D. I. KURSKY AT THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIAT OF JUSTICE ON COMBATING RED TAPE
BY JUDICIAL MEASURES**

To the People's Commissar of Justice, COMRADE KURSKY, the Vice-Commissar and all the members of the collegium

I HAVE sent you through the Secretary of the Council of People's Commissars a statement made by Prof. Graftio, together with astonishing documents on red tape.

This red tape, particularly in the Moscow and central institutions, is of the usual sort; all the more attention should therefore be paid to combating it.

My impression is that the Commissariat of Justice takes a purely formal attitude towards this question, which is radically wrong.

It is necessary:

- 1) To bring this matter before the courts;
- 2) To denounce the culprits in the press and to punish them severely;
- 3) For the Central Committee to impress upon the judges that red tape must be punished more severely;
- 4) To arrange a conference of Moscow people's judges, members of tribunals, etc., for the purpose of drawing up *effective* measures for combating red tape;
- 5) Without fail, this autumn and winter of 1921-22, to try before the Moscow courts four to six cases of red tape in Moscow, to select the "most striking" cases and to make a *political* trial of each one of them;
- 6) To find at least two or three able Communist "experts" in combating red tape, the fiercest and most vigorous of them (invite Sosnovsky), in order to learn from them how to *hound out* red tape;

7) To issue a *good*, sensible, not bureaucratic *letter* (a circular of the People's Commissariat of Justice) on combating red tape.

I place responsibility for this very important matter on the People's Commissar and the Vice-Commissar *personally*, and request that I be kept *regularly* informed of what is being done in regard to it.

Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars

LENIN

September 3, 1921

A LETTER TO A. D. TSURUPA ON THE REORGANISATION OF THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS AND OF THE COUNCIL OF LABOUR AND DEFENCE

COMRADE TSURUPA,

Arising out of our telephone conversation yesterday and your promise strictly to carry out doctor's orders, we must thoroughly discuss the whole system of work and think the matter out very carefully.

The most radical defect the Council of People's Commissars and the Council of Labour and Defence suffer from is the absence of executive control. The putrid bureaucratic bog is *sucking us* into the scribbling of documents, the talking about decrees and the drafting of decrees, while vital work is being submerged in this morass of paper.

The cunning saboteurs are deliberately dragging us into this morass of paper. The majority of the People's Commissars and other dignitaries are unconsciously "putting their heads in the noose."

You must *at all cost* take advantage of the strict medical regime prescribed for you to tear yourself away from fuss and bustle, commissions, talking and writing of documents, and to *ponder* over the system of work with a view to *radically reorganising it*.

You should concentrate on reorganising our at present disgustingly bureaucratic work, on combating bureaucracy and red tape, and on *executive control*.

Executive control, verifying what is actually being done—this is your fundamental and main task. For this purpose you should set up a small apparatus (from four to six persons) consisting of thoroughly tried and tested assistants (a manager, assistant manager, secretary, etc.).

For this purpose, in my opinion, it is necessary:

1) To reduce the load of the *Council of People's Commissars* and the *Council of Labour and Defence* by transferring all minor questions to the *Small Council of People's Commissars* and to the business meetings of the *Council of Labour and Defence*.

This is a beginning. But in view of our cursed Oblomov methods, this will "flop" in two weeks if it is not watched, not spurred on, not verified, not whipped up with three whips.

The manager (as well as the Secretariat of the *Council of People's Commissars* and the *Council of Labour and Defence*) should be trained strictly to see to it that minor questions are not brought up on the Council of People's Commissars or the Council of Labour and Defence and that all questions are thrice sifted (by inquiry of the respective People's Commissariats, their urgent reply; ditto the codification department, etc., etc.) before they are brought up.

In conjunction with Gorbunov,¹ *regulations* should be drawn up in writing governing the raising of questions and their further progress, and you personally should ascertain *not less* than once a month whether these regulations are being adhered to and whether they are achieving their purpose, *viz.*, to reduce the amount of document-writing and red tape, to secure more thoughtfulness, more responsibility on the part of the People's Commissars, to substitute *for hastily drafted decrees careful, prolonged, practical, executive control and verification of experience*, to establish personal responsibility (actually, complete absence of responsibility prevails in the upper branches of our People's Commissariats and of their departments; and the saboteurs take full advantage of this. The result is Oblomovism, which is killing everything).

I know that this is *extremely* difficult. But that is precisely why you must devote yourselves *entirely* to it.

Hence:

2) A minimum of meetings. Rate: one meeting per week of the Council of People's Commissars plus one meeting per week

¹ Plus a codifier, plus one representative of the Small Council of People's Commissars.

of the Council of Labour and Defence, each to last two hours.

3) The Supreme Economic Commission. *All* its sub-commissions should be dissolved as soon as possible. In their stead the People's Commissars should be asked (every one of them) to appoint *responsible* persons to draft bills that the respective People's Commissar is to endorse and he personally co-ordinate with all the other People's Commissars who are "interested" in them *in the shortest possible time*, and then bring them before the Council of Labour and Defence or the Council of People's Commissars.

The Supreme Economic Commission is to exist *exclusively* for the purpose of co-ordination (*codifying*) and brief verification (*seal*) by you plus Kamenev.

Exclusively for this purpose.

Not as a talking shop.

Not for discussions.

4) You should not belong to a single commission, not to a single one, except the Supreme Economic Commission.

5) Fight against the disgusting plethora of commissions; substitute for them the formal request for a *written opinion* given in the shortest possible time.

6) In this way you should be relieved of fuss and bustle, which is *killing us all*, and secure the opportunity of calmly thinking over the work *as a whole*—and principally of concentrating on executive control, on combating bureaucracy and red tape.

Please think this matter over and write me.

With Communist greetings,

LENIN

January 24, 1922

PART VI

SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION AND THE PROBLEMS OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

THE TASKS OF THE YOUTH LEAGUES

*Speech Delivered at the Third All-Russian Congress of the Russian
Young Communist League, October 2, 1920*

COMRADES, I should like today to discuss the fundamental tasks of the Young Communist League, and in connection with this subject I should like to discuss what, in general, the youth organisations should be like in a Socialist republic.

It is all the more necessary to deal with this question for the reason that, in a certain sense, we may say that it is precisely the youth who are confronted with the real task of creating Communist society. Clearly, the generation of workers that was brought up in capitalist society can at best fulfil the task of abolishing the foundations of the old, capitalist, social life based on exploitation. At best it can fulfil the task of creating a social system that will help the proletariat and the toiling classes to retain power and to lay a firm foundation on which only the generation that is starting to work under the new conditions, under conditions in which exploiting relations between men no longer exist, can build.

And so, in approaching the tasks of the youth from this point of view, I must say that the tasks of the youth in general, and of the Young Communist League and all other organisations in particular, may be summed up in one word: learn.

Of course, this is only "one word." It does not answer the most important and material questions: to learn what; and how to learn? The whole point here is that, simultaneously with the transformation of the old capitalist society, tuition, the training and education of the new generation that will create Communist society, cannot be conducted on the old lines. The tuition, training and education of the youth must be based on the material that was bequeathed to us by the old society. We can build Communism only on the

sum of knowledge, organisations and institutions, only on the stock of human forces and means left to us by the old society. Only by radically remoulding the work of instructing, organising and training the youth shall we be able to ensure that the result of the efforts of the young generation will be the creation of a society unlike the old, *i.e.*, of Communist society. That is why we must deal in detail with the question of what we should teach the youth, and of how the youth should learn if it really wants to justify its title of Communist youth; of how it should be trained in order to be able to complete the building of what we have started.

I must say that the first and most natural reply would seem to be that the Young Communist League, and the youth as a whole, which wants to pass to Communism, should learn Communism.

But this reply—"learn Communism"—is too general. What do we need in order to learn Communism? What must be singled out from the whole sum of general knowledge in order to acquire a knowledge of Communism? Here a number of dangers arise, which often confront us when the task of learning Communism is presented incorrectly, or when it is interpreted too one-sidedly.

Naturally, the first thought that enters one's mind is that learning Communism means imbibing the sum of knowledge that is contained in Communist textbooks, pamphlets and books. But such a definition of the study of Communism would be crude and inadequate. If the study of Communism consisted entirely of imbibing what is contained in Communist books and pamphlets, we would too easily obtain Communist text-jugglers or braggarts, and this would very often cause us harm and loss, because those who had learnt by rote what is contained in Communist books and pamphlets would prove incapable of combining all this knowledge, and would prove incapable of acting in the way Communism really demands.

One of the greatest evils and misfortunes bequeathed to us by the old capitalist society is the complete separation of books from practical life; for we had books in which everything was described in the most attractive manner, and in the majority of cases these books contained the most disgusting, hypocritical lies, and described Communist society falsely. That is why the mere routine absorption

of what is written in books about Communism would be extremely wrong. In our speeches and articles we do not now merely repeat what was previously said about Communism, because our speeches and articles are connected with daily and all-sided work. Without work, without struggle, a book knowledge of Communism obtained from Communist books and works would be worthless, for it would continue the old separation of theory from practice, the old separation that was the most disgusting feature of the old bourgeois society.

It would be still more dangerous if we began to learn only Communist slogans. If we did not realise this danger in time and if we did not direct all our efforts to avert this danger, the half a million or million boys and girls who call themselves Communists after learning Communism in this way would only damage the cause of Communism very considerably.

Here the question arises: how should we combine all this in order to learn Communism? What must we take from the old school, from the old science? The old school declared that its aim was to give a versatile education, to teach science in general. We know that this was utterly false, for the whole of society was based and maintained on the division of men into classes, into exploiters and oppressed. Naturally, the old school, being thoroughly imbued with the class spirit, imparted knowledge only to the children of the bourgeoisie. Every word was adapted to the interests of the bourgeoisie. In these schools the young generation of workers and peasants were not educated; their minds were stuffed with things that were to the interest of that bourgeoisie. They were trained to become their obedient servants who could create profits for them and not disturb their peace and idleness. That is why, rejecting the old school, we have set ourselves the aim of taking from it only what we require in order to secure a real Communist education.

This brings me to the reproaches and accusations which we constantly hear about the old school, and which very often lead to totally wrong conclusions. It is said that the old school was a school for learning by rote, in which knowledge was drilled into the pupils. That is true; nevertheless, we must distinguish between what was bad in the old school and what was useful for us, and we

must be able to choose from it what is necessary for Communism.

The old school was a school for learning by rote; it compelled pupils to imbibe a mass of useless, superfluous, barren knowledge which clogged the brain, and which transformed the young generation into officials all of one pattern, as it were. But you would be committing a great mistake if you attempted to draw the conclusion that one can become a Communist without acquiring what human knowledge has accumulated. It would be a mistake to believe that it is sufficient to learn Communist slogans, the conclusions of Communist science, and that it is not necessary to acquire the sum of knowledge of which Communism itself is a consequence. Marxism is an example of how Communism arose out of the sum total of human knowledge.

You have read and heard that Communist theory, the science of Communism, mainly created by Marx, the doctrines of Marxism, have ceased to be the product of a single Socialist of the nineteenth century, even though he was a genius, and that they have become the doctrines of millions and tens of millions of proletarians all over the world who are applying them in their struggle against capitalism. And if you asked, "Why were the doctrines of Marx able to capture the hearts of millions and tens of millions of the most revolutionary class?" the only answer you would receive would be: It was because Marx took his stand on the firm foundation of human knowledge which had been gained under capitalism. After studying the laws of development of human society, Marx realised that the development of capitalism was inevitably leading to Communism. And the principal thing is that he proved this only on the basis of the most exact, most detailed, most profound study of this capitalist society, with the aid of preceding knowledge, which he had thoroughly assimilated. He critically studied all that had been created by human society, and did not ignore a single point of it. He studied all that had been created by the human mind, subjected it to criticism, tested it on the working class movement, and arrived at conclusions which those who were restricted within bourgeois limits, or bound by bourgeois prejudices, could not arrive at.

This is what we must bear in mind when we talk about proletar-

ian culture, for example. Unless we clearly understand that only by an exact knowledge of the culture created by the whole development of mankind, that only by re-working this culture, is it possible to build proletarian culture, unless this is understood, we shall not be able to solve our problem. Proletarian culture is not something that has sprung from nowhere, it is not an invention of those who call themselves experts in proletarian culture. That is all nonsense. Proletarian culture must be the result of the natural development of the stores of knowledge which mankind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist society, landlord society and bureaucratic society. All these roads and paths have led, are leading, and continue to lead, to proletarian culture in the same way as the political economy re-worked by Marx showed us what human society must arrive at, showed us the transition to the class struggle, to the beginning of the proletarian revolution.

When we sometimes hear representatives of the youth and certain advocates of a new system of education attacking the old school and saying that it taught by rote, we say to them that we must take what was good in the old school. We must not take from the old school the system whereby the young man's mind was crammed with knowledge nine-tenths of which was useless and one-tenth of which was distorted. But this does not mean that we must confine ourselves to Communist conclusions and learn only Communist slogans. We shall not create Communism by this means. One can become a Communist only when one enriches one's mind with the knowledge of all the wealth created by mankind.

Learning by rote is of no use to us, but we must develop and perfect the mind of every student with a knowledge of the main facts. Communism would become a void, would become a mere signboard, the Communist would be a mere braggart if all the knowledge he has obtained were not mentally digested. You must not only assimilate this knowledge but assimilate it critically, so that your mind is not crammed with useless lumber but enriched with all the facts that are indispensable for the modern man of education. If a Communist took it into his head to boast about his Communism on the basis of the ready-made conclusions he has obtained without having put in a great deal of serious and hard

work, without understanding the facts which he must examine critically, he would be a very deplorable Communist. Such superficiality would be decidedly fatal. If I know that I know little I will strive to learn more; but if a man says that he is a Communist and that he need know nothing thoroughly, he will never be anything like a Communist.

The old school turned out servants which the capitalists needed; the old school transformed men of science into men who had to write and say what pleased the capitalists. That means that we must abolish it. But does the fact that we must abolish it, destroy it, mean that we must not take from it all that mankind has accumulated for the benefit of men? Does that mean that it is not our duty to distinguish between what was necessary for capitalism and what is necessary for Communism?

For the old drill-sergeant methods that were employed in bourgeois society in opposition to the will of the majority, we shall substitute the class conscious discipline of the workers and peasants who combine their hatred for the old society with the determination, the ability and the readiness to unite and organise their forces for this fight, to transform the wills of millions and hundreds of millions who are disunited, dispersed and scattered over the territory of a huge country, into a single will; for without that single will we shall inevitably be defeated. Without this solidarity, without this class conscious discipline of the workers and peasants, our cause would be hopeless. Without this we shall be unable to conquer the capitalists and landlords of the whole world. We shall not even be able to consolidate the foundation let alone build the new Communist society on this foundation. Similarly, in rejecting the old school, bearing a legitimate and necessary hatred for the old school, prizing the readiness to destroy the old school, we must understand that in place of the old system of tuition, in place of the old system of memorising, the old drilling methods, we must put the ability to take for ourselves the sum total of human knowledge and to take it in such a way that Communism shall not be something learnt by rote, but something that you yourselves have thought over, that it shall be an inevitable conclusion from the point of view of modern education.

That is how we must present the main tasks when we speak of the task of learning Communism.

In order to explain this to you and at the same time to take up the question of how to learn, I will give you a practical example. You all know that following the military tasks, the tasks of protecting the republic, we are now confronted with economic tasks. We know that Communist society cannot be built up unless we rebuild industry and agriculture, and these cannot be rebuilt in the old way. They must be rebuilt on a modern basis, according to the last word of science. You know that this basis is electricity, that only when the whole country, all branches of industry and agriculture have been electrified, only when you have mastered this task, will you be able to build up for yourselves the Communist society which the old generation cannot build. We are confronted with the task of economically regenerating the whole country, of reorganising, restoring both agriculture and industry on a modern technical basis, which rests on modern science, on technique, on electricity. You understand perfectly well that illiterate people are unsuitable for electrification, and even the mere ability to read and write is inadequate. It is not enough to understand what electricity is; it is necessary to know how to apply it to industry and to agriculture, and to the various branches of industry and agriculture. We must learn this ourselves, and teach it to the whole of the younger generation of toilers. This is the task that confronts every class conscious Communist, every young man who regards himself as a Communist and who clearly understands that, having joined the Young Communist League, he has pledged himself to help the Party to build Communism and to help the whole of the young generation to build Communist society. He must understand that he can build this only on the basis of modern education; and if he does not acquire this education Communism will remain a pious wish.

The task that confronted the old generation was that of overthrowing the bourgeoisie. The main task in their day was to criticise the bourgeoisie, to rouse the hatred of the masses towards them, to develop the class consciousness of the masses and their ability to combine their forces. The new generation is confronted with a much more complicated task. Not only have you to combine all your

forces to protect the rule of the workers and peasants against the attacks of the capitalists: that you must do; that you understand perfectly; the Communist sees this distinctly before him. But this is not enough. You must build up Communist society. In many respects the first half of the work is done. The old is destroyed, as it deserved to be destroyed; it has been transformed into a heap of ruins, as it deserved to be. The ground has been cleared, and on this ground the young Communist generation must build Communist society. You are confronted with the task of construction, and you will be able to cope with it only if you master all modern knowledge, and if you are able to transform Communism from ready-made, memorised formulæ, counsels, recipes, prescriptions and programmes into that living thing which unites your immediate work; if you are able to transform Communism into a guide for your practical work.

This is the task by which you should be guided in the work of educating, training and rousing the whole of the young generation. You must be in the front ranks of the millions of builders of Communist society, and every young man and young woman should be such a builder. Unless you enlist the whole mass of young workers and peasants in the work of building Communist society you will not succeed in building it.

Naturally, this brings me to the question of how we should teach Communism and what are the specific features of our methods.

Here, first of all, I will deal with the question of Communist ethics.

You must train yourselves to become Communists. The task of the Young Communist League is to organise its practical activities in such a way that, in learning, organising, uniting and fighting, it shall train its members and all those who look upon it as their leader, train them to become Communists. The whole object of the training, education and tuition of the youth of today should be to imbue them with Communist ethics.

But is there such a thing as Communist ethics? Is there such a thing as Communist morality? Of course there is. Often it is made to appear that we have no ethics of our own; and very often the bourgeoisie accuse us Communists of repudiating all ethics. This is

a method of shuffling concepts, of throwing dust in the eyes of the workers and peasants.

In what sense do we repudiate ethics and morality?

In the sense that they were preached by the bourgeoisie, who declared that ethics were God's commandments. We, of course, say that we do not believe in God, and that we know perfectly well that the clergy, the landlords and the bourgeoisie spoke in the name of God in order to pursue their own exploiters' interests. Or, instead of deducing these ethics from the commandments of morality, from the commandments of God, they deduced them from idealistic or semi-idealistic phrases, which were always very similar to God's commandments.

We repudiate all morality that is taken outside of human, class concepts. We say that this is deception, a fraud, which clogs the brains of the workers and peasants in the interests of the landlords and capitalists.

We say that our morality is entirely subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. Our morality is deduced from the class struggle of the proletariat.

The old society was based on the oppression of all the workers and peasants by the landlords and capitalists. We had to destroy this, we had to overthrow this; but for this we had to create unity. God will not create such unity.

This unity could be created only by the factories and works, only by the proletariat, trained, and roused from its age-long slumber; only when that class was formed did the mass movement begin which led to what we see now—the victory of the proletarian revolution in one of the weakest countries in the world, a country which for three years has repelled the attacks of the bourgeoisie of the whole world. And we see that the proletarian revolution is growing all over the world. We now say, on the basis of experience, that the proletariat alone could create the compact force that could take the lead of the disunited and scattered peasantry, that could withstand all the attacks of the exploiters. This class alone can help the toiling masses to unite, to rally and completely withstand all attacks upon, completely consolidate and completely build up. Communist society.

That is why we say that for us there is no such thing as morality taken outside of human society; such a morality is a fraud. For us, morality is subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat.

What is this class struggle? It is—overthrowing the tsar, overthrowing the capitalists, abolishing the capitalist class.

And what are classes in general? Classes are that which permits one section of society to appropriate the labour of another section. If one section of society appropriates all the land, we have a landlord class and a peasant class. If one section of society possesses the factories and works, has shares and capital, and the other section works in these factories, we have a capitalist class and a proletarian class.

It was easy to kick out the tsar—only a few days were required for that. It was not very difficult to kick out the landlords—we succeeded in doing that in a few months. Nor was it difficult to kick out the capitalists. But it is much more difficult to abolish classes; we still have the division into workers and peasants. If the peasant is settled on a plot of land and appropriates to himself superfluous grain, that is, grain that he does not need for himself or for his cattle, while all the rest of the people have to go without grain, then the peasant becomes an exploiter. The more grain he clings to, the more profit he can make; as for the rest, let them starve. He says to himself: "The more they starve, the higher the price at which I can sell my grain." Everybody should work according to a common plan, on common land, in common factories and works, under common management. Is it easy to bring this about? You see that it is not as easy as kicking out the tsar, the landlords and the capitalists. In order to achieve this the proletariat must re-educate, re-train a section of the peasantry; it must win over to its side those of them who are toiling peasants, in order to crush the resistance of those peasants who are rich and make profit out of the poverty and want of the rest. Hence, the object of the proletarian struggle has not yet been achieved by the fact that we have overthrown the tsar and have kicked out the landlords and capitalists; and this is precisely the object of the system which we call the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The class struggle is still proceeding; it has merely changed its forms. It is the class struggle of the proletariat to prevent the return of the old exploiters, to unite the scattered masses of ignorant peasants into one union. The class struggle is still proceeding, and our task is to subordinate everything to the interests of this struggle. And we subordinate our Communist morality to this task. We say: Morality is that which serves to destroy the old exploiting society and to unite all the toilers around the proletariat, which is creating a new Communist society.

Communist morality is the morality which serves this struggle, which unites the toilers against all exploitation, against all small property, for small property puts into the hands of one person what has been created by the labour of the whole of society. The land in our country is common property.

But suppose I take a piece of this common land and grow twice as much grain as I need and speculate with the surplus? Suppose I argue that the more starving people there are, the more I will get for my grain? Would I then behave like a Communist? No. I would behave like an exploiter, like a property-owner. This must be combated. If this is allowed to go on, everything will slip back to the rule of the capitalists, to the rule of the bourgeoisie, as has happened more than once in previous revolutions. And in order to prevent the restoration of the rule of the capitalists and the bourgeoisie we must put a stop to this huckstering, we must prevent individuals from enriching themselves at the expense of the rest: the toilers must unite with the proletariat and form a Communist society. This is the principal specific feature of the fundamental task of the Young Communist League and of its local organisations.

The old society was based on the principle: "Rob or be robbed, work for others or make others work for you, be a slave-owner or a slave." Naturally, people brought up in such a society imbibe with their mother's milk, so to speak, the psychology, the habit, the concept: "Either a slave-owner or a slave, or a small owner, a small employee, a small official, an intellectual—in short, a man who only looks after himself, and does not care a scrap about anyone else."

I own this plot of land and I do not care a scrap about anyone

else; if the others starve, all the better, the more will I be able to get for my grain. I have a job as a doctor, or an engineer, or a teacher, or a clerk, and I do not care about anyone else. Perhaps, if I toady to and please the powers that be I shall keep my job and even climb up into the ranks of the bourgeoisie. A Communist cannot have such a psychology and such sentiments. When the workers and peasants proved that they were able by their own efforts to defend themselves and create a new society, a new Communist upbringing began, an upbringing in the midst of the struggle against the exploiters, an upbringing in alliance with the proletariat against the self-seekers and small owners, against the psychology and habits which say, "I seek my own profit and I do not care about anyone else."

This is the reply to the question of how the young, rising generation should learn Communism.

It can learn Communism only by linking up every step in its studies, training and education with the continuous struggle the proletarians and the toilers are waging against the old exploiting society. When people talk to us about morality we say: For the Communist, morality consists entirely of compact united discipline and conscious mass struggle against the exploiters. We do not believe in eternal morality, and we expose all the fables about morality. Morality serves the purpose of helping human society to rise to a higher level and to abolish the exploitation of labour.

In order to achieve this we must have the young generation which began to awaken to conscious life in the midst of the disciplined, desperate struggle against the bourgeoisie. In this struggle it will train genuine Communists, to this struggle it must subordinate, and with it must link up, every step in its studies, education and training. The upbringing of the Communist youth must not consist of all sorts of sentimental speeches and moral precepts. This is not upbringing. When people see how their fathers and mothers lived under the yoke of the landlords and capitalists, when they themselves experience the sufferings of those who started the struggle against the exploiters, when they see the sacrifice entailed by the continuation of this struggle in order to hold what has been won, and when they see what frenzied foes the landlords and cap-

italists are—they, in this environment, receive a Communist upbringing. At the basis of Communist morality lies the struggle for the consolidation and consummation of Communism. That also is the basis of Communist training, education and tuition. That is the reply to the question of how to learn Communism.

We would not believe in learning, training and education if they were confined to the school and isolated from seething life. As long as the workers and peasants are oppressed by the landlords and capitalists, and as long as the schools remain in the hands of the landlords and capitalists, the young generation remains blind and ignorant. But our schools must impart to the youth the fundamentals of knowledge, must train them to be able to work out Communist views independently; they must make educated people of them. At the same time, as long as they attend school, the school must make them participants in the struggle for emancipation from the exploiters. The Young Communist League will justify its name as the league of the young Communist generation when it links up every step in its tuition, training and education with participation in the general struggle of all the toilers against the exploiters; for you know perfectly well that as long as Russia remains the only workers' republic and the old bourgeois system continues in the rest of the world, we shall be weaker than they, we shall be under the constant menace of attack. Only if we learn to be compact and united shall we win in future struggles, and, having become stronger, become really invincible. Thus, to be a Communist means that you must organise and unite the whole of the rising generation and set an example of training and discipline in this struggle. Then you will be able to start building the edifice of Communist society and bring it to completion.

In order to make this clearer to you I will quote an example. We call ourselves Communists. What is a Communist? The word Communist is derived from the Latin word for "common." Communist society is a society in which all things—the land, the factories—are owned in common. Communism means working in common.

Is it possible to work in common if each works on a separate plot of land? Common labour cannot be created all at once. It does

not drop from the skies. It comes as a result of toil and suffering. It is created in the course of the struggle. Old books are of no use for this; no one will believe them. One's own living experience is required. When Kolchak and Denikin were marching from Siberia and the South the peasants were on their side. They did not like Bolshevism because the Bolsheviks took their grain at a fixed price. But when the peasants experienced the rule of Kolchak and Denikin in Siberia and the Ukraine, they realised that they had only one alternative: either to go to the capitalist, and he would at once hand them over into slavery to the landlords; or to follow the workers, who, it is true, do not promise a land flowing with milk and honey, who demand iron discipline and staunchness in the arduous struggle, but who will lead them out of slavery to the capitalists and landlords. When even the ignorant peasants realised and saw this as a result of their own experience, after having passed through a stern school, they became conscious adherents of Communism. It is such experience that the Young Communist League must lay at the basis of all its activities.

I have replied to the question of what we must learn, what we must take from the old school and from the old science. I will now try to answer the question of how we must learn this. The answer is: only by inseparably linking up every step in the activities of the school, every step in training, education and tuition, with the struggle of the toilers against the exploiters.

I will quote a few examples from the experience of the work of one or another of the youth organisations to illustrate how the learning of Communism should proceed. Everybody is talking about abolishing illiteracy. You know that it is impossible to build Communist society in a country in which the people are illiterate. It is not enough for the Soviet government to issue an order, or for the Party to issue a definite slogan, or even to assign a certain number of the best workers for this work. The young generation itself must take up this work. Communism means that the youth, the young men and women who belong to the Young Communist League, shall say: This is our job. We shall unite and go into the country to abolish illiteracy, so that there shall be no illiterates among our rising generation. We should like to see the rising youth devote

their activities to this work. You know that it will not be possible to transform ignorant, illiterate Russia into a literate country quickly. But if the Young Communist League sets to work on it, if all the young men and women work for the benefit of all, the League, which has a membership of 400,000 young men and women, will have a right to call itself the Young Communist League. One of the tasks of the League is, after having acquired certain knowledge, to help those young people who cannot by their own efforts liberate themselves from the gloom of illiteracy. Being a member of the Young Communist League means giving one's labour, giving one's efforts to the common cause. That is what Communist education means. Only by performing such work does a young man or woman become a real Communist. Only if they achieve practical results in this work will they become Communists.

Take, for example, work on the suburban vegetable farms. It is one of the tasks of the Young Communist League. The people are starving; there is starvation in the factories and works. In order to put a stop to starvation, vegetable gardens ought to be developed; but agriculture is being carried on in the old way. The more class conscious elements should take this up; if they did, you would find that the number of vegetable gardens would increase, their area would grow, and we would get better results. The Young Communist League should take an active part in this. Every local League organisation should regard this as its job.

The Young Communist League should be the shock group which, in every job that has to be done, gives a hand, displays initiative, makes the start. The League should be such that any worker may see that it consists of people whose doctrines he may not understand, whose doctrines he may not immediately adopt, but whose practical work, whose activities, prove to him that they are the people who are showing him the right road.

If the Young Communist League fails to organise its work in this way in all spheres, it will show that it is slipping into the old bourgeois road. We must combine our training with the struggle of the toilers against the exploiters in order to help the former to fulfil the tasks that logically follow from the doctrines of Communism.

The members of the League should spend every spare hour on the vegetable gardens in order to improve them; or on organising the education of young people in some factory, works, etc. We want to transform Russia from a poverty-stricken and wretched country into a wealthy country. And so the Young Communist League must combine its education, its tuition, its training with the labour of the workers and peasants, and not shut itself up in its schools and confine itself to reading Communist books and pamphlets. Only by working side by side with the workers and peasants is it possible to become a genuine Communist. Everyone must be able to see that all those who belong to the Young Communist League are literate and at the same time are able to work. When everyone sees that we have driven the old drill methods from the school and substituted class conscious discipline for them, that every young man and woman takes part in subbotniks, that they utilise every vegetable garden to help the people—the people will cease to look upon labour as they looked upon it before.

One of the tasks of the Young Communist League is to render assistance in the village or block in which the members live in the matter of—I will take a small example—cleanliness and distribution of food. How was this done in the old capitalist society? Everybody worked for himself, and no one cared whether there were any sick or aged, or whether all the housework fell on the shoulders of the women, who, as a result, were in a state of oppression and slavery. Whose business is it to fight against this? It is the business of the Young Communist League, which must say: We shall change all this, we shall organise detachments of young people who will help to maintain cleanliness, or help to distribute food, make systematic house-to-house inspections; who will work in an organised manner for the benefit of the whole of society, properly distribute its forces and prove that labour must be organised.

The generation which is now about fifty years old cannot count on seeing Communist society. This generation will die out before Communist society is established. But the generation which is now fifteen years old will see Communist society, and will itself build it. And it must realise that the whole purpose of its life is to build this society. In the old society, work was carried on by separate

families, and nobody united them except the landlords and the capitalists, who oppressed the masses of the people. We must organise all labour, no matter how dirty and arduous it may be, so that every worker and peasant may regard himself as part of the great army of free labour and feel convinced that he will be able to build up his life without the landlords and capitalists, will be able to establish the Communist system. The Young Communist League must train the masses for conscious and disciplined labour when they are still young, from the age of twelve. That is what will enable us to count on being able to solve the problems that now confront us. We must reckon that not less than ten years will be required for the electrification of the country, so that our impoverished land may be served with the latest achievements of technique. And so, the generation which is now fifteen years old, and which in ten or twenty years' time will be living in Communist society, must arrange all their tasks of tuition in such a way that every day, in every village, and in every city, the young people shall engage in the practical solution of the problems of common labour, even of the smallest, even of the most simple kind. To the extent that this is done in every village, to the extent that Communist competition is developed, to the extent that the youth prove that they are able to unite their labour, to that extent will the success of Communist construction be ensured. Only by regarding every step one takes from the point of view of the success of this construction, only if we ask ourselves whether we have done all we can to be united, conscious toilers, only by passing through this prolonged process, will the Young Communist League unite its half a million members into a single army of labour and win universal respect.

PROLETARIAN CULTURE

JUDGING by *Izvestiya* of October 8, Comrade Lunacharsky, speaking at the congress of the Proletcult, said the *very opposite* of what he and I had agreed upon yesterday.

It is necessary with all possible speed to draft a resolution (for the Proletcult congress), get it passed through the Central Committee and manage to get it carried at this *very session* of the Proletcult. It must be got through the collegium of the Commissariat for Education and the congress of the Proletcult in the name of the Central Committee today, for the congress is closing today.

Draft Resolution

1) In the Soviet workers' and peasants' republic, the whole system of education, in the political-educational sphere in general as well as in the special sphere of art, must be imbued with the spirit of the class struggle of the proletariat for the successful achievement of the aims of its dictatorship—the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the abolition of classes and the abolition of all exploitation of man by man.

2) Therefore the proletariat, personified by its vanguard, the Communist Party, as well as by all the various kinds of proletarian organisations in general, must take a most active and leading part in the whole work of popular education.

3) The whole experience of modern history, and particularly the more than half a century of revolutionary struggle of the proletariat in all countries in the world since the appearance of *The Communist Manifesto*, has indisputably proved that the Marxian world outlook is the only correct expression of the interests, the point of view and culture of the revolutionary proletariat.

4) Marxism won for itself its world-historical significance as

the ideology of the revolutionary proletariat by the fact that it did not cast aside the valuable gains of the bourgeois epoch, but on the contrary assimilated and re-worked all that was valuable in the more than two thousand years of development of human thought and culture. Further work on this basis and in this direction, inspired (practically) by the experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat as its last struggle against all exploitation, can alone be regarded as the development of really proletarian culture.

5) Adhering unswervingly to the point of view of these principles, the All-Russian Congress of Proletarian Culture most emphatically rejects as theoretically wrong and practically harmful all attempts to invent a special culture, all attempts to isolate itself in an exclusive organisation, to restrict the work of the People's Commissariat for Education and the Proletcult to separate spheres, etc., or to establish the Proletcult as an "autonomous" organisation within the People's Commissariat for Education, etc. On the contrary, the Congress imposes upon all organisations of the Proletcult the absolute duty of regarding themselves as being entirely auxiliary organs in the system of institutions of the People's Commissariat for Education, and performing their duties under the general guidance of the Soviet government (in particular, the People's Commissariat for Education) and of the Russian Communist Party, as part of the duties of the proletarian dictatorship.

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Comrade Lunacharsky says that his speech was wrongly reported. But this makes the resolution *all the more* urgently necessary.

October 8, 1920

PAGES FROM A DIARY

THE REPORT issued the other day on literacy among the population of Russia based on the census of 1920 (*Literacy in Russia*, issued by the Central Statistical Board of the People's Commissariat for Education, Moscow, 1922) is a very important publication.

Below I quote a table illustrating the state of literacy among the population of Russia in 1897 and 1920, which I have taken from this report.

	Literates per thousand males		Literates per thousand females		Literates per thousand both sexes	
	1897	1920	1897	1920	1897	1920
1) European Russia	326	422	136	225	229	330
2) North Caucasus	241	357	56	215	150	281
3) Siberia (Western)	170	307	46	134	108	218
Total	318	409	131	244	223	319

While we are chattering about proletarian culture and its relation to bourgeois culture, facts present us with figures which show that things are bad with us even in regard to bourgeois culture. It turns out, as was to be expected, that we are still very backward in regard to general literacy and that even our progress compared with tsarist times (1897) has been too slow. This serves as a severe warning and reproach to those who are soaring in the empiric heights of "proletarian culture." It shows what imperative spadework still confronts us in order to reach the level of an ordinary West European civilised state. It also shows what an enormous amount of work confronts us today in order to achieve anything like a real cultural level on the basis of our proletarian gains.

We must not restrict ourselves, however, to this incontrovertible but too theoretical proposition. At the very next revision of our

quarterly budget we must take this matter up in a practical manner. Of course, it must not be the expenditure of the People's Commissariat for Education that must be the first to be cut down, but that of other departments, in order that the sums thus released may be allocated to the needs of the People's Commissariat for Education. We must not be chary about increasing the bread ration for school teachers this year, as we are fairly well supplied.

Generally speaking, the work that is now being carried on in the sphere of public education cannot be said to be too restricted. Quite a lot is being done to stimulate the old teachers, to enlist them in the work of solving new problems, to get them interested in the new method of presenting problems of pedagogics, and to get them interested in such problems as the problem of religion.

But we are not doing the main thing. We are not concerning ourselves, we are not concerning ourselves sufficiently, with the question of raising the village school teacher to the level that is absolutely essential if we are going to speak of any culture at all, whether proletarian or even bourgeois culture. We must bear in mind the semi-Asiatic state of lack of culture from which we have not yet emerged, and from which we shall not be able to extricate ourselves without serious effort—although we have the opportunity of extricating ourselves, for nowhere are the masses of the people so interested in real culture as in our country, nowhere is the problem of culture presented so profoundly and so consistently as in our country; in no other country is state power in the hands of the working class, which, in the main, fully appreciates its shortcomings, I will not say in culture, but in literacy; nowhere is the working class ready to make and actually making such sacrifices for the purpose of improving its position in this respect as in our country.

Too little, infinitely too little, is being done in our country to shift our state budget in the direction of satisfying, first of all, the requirements of elementary education. Even in our People's Commissariat for Education we find excessive staffs in, say, the State Publishing Department, while the fact is ignored that the state's first concern should not be to have publishing houses but to have someone able to read, to have a larger number of people able to

read, to create wider political scope for the publication of books in future Russia. We still follow the old (bad) habit of devoting much more time and effort to technical questions such as publishing books than to the general, political question of literacy among the people.

If we take the Chief Vocational Education Board I am sure we shall find much that is superfluous and inflated by departmental interest, much that is unadapted to the requirements of broad, popular education. Not everything that exists in the Chief Vocational Education Board can be justified by the legitimate desire first of all to raise and give a practical direction to the education of our industrial youth. If we examine the staff of the Chief Vocational Education Board we shall find that a great deal of it is inflated and fictitious from this point of view, and should be reduced. Many economies may and should still be made in the proletarian-peasant state in order to develop literacy among the people by closing down all institutions which are either playthings of a semi-aristocratic type or such as we can do without for a long time to come in view of the state of literacy among the people revealed by statistics.

Our village school teachers should be placed on a level that has never been achieved, and can never be achieved, in bourgeois society. This is a truism that requires no proof. We must strive towards this by means of systematic, steady and persistent work in raising the spiritual level of the teachers, of training them thoroughly for their really high calling, and, principally, principally, principally, by raising their material level.

We must systematically increase our work of organising the village school teachers in order to transform them from the bulwark of the bourgeois system that they still are in all capitalist countries without exception into the bulwark of the Soviet system, in order, through their agency, to win the peasantry away from their alliance with the bourgeoisie and to bring them into alliance with the proletariat.

I will briefly mention that a special role in this should be played by systematic visits to the rural districts, which, incidentally, is already being done and should be systematically developed. We

should not stint money, which very often we waste on the state apparatus which almost entirely belongs to the old historical epoch, on measures like arranging visits to the rural districts.

I collected material for the speech I was to have delivered at the Congress of Soviets in December 1922 on the patronage of urban workers over rural inhabitants. A part of this material was obtained for me by Comrade Khodorovsky and I ask the comrades to examine this question now, since I was unable to deal with it and give it publicity at the congress.

This is a fundamental political question concerning the relations between town and country, which is of decisive importance for the whole of our revolution. While the bourgeois state systematically exerts all efforts to stupefy the urban workers and utilises all the literature published at the expense of the state, at the expense of the tsarist and bourgeois parties, we can and should utilise our political power for the purpose of making the urban worker a real channel for conveying Communist ideas to the rural proletariat.

I said "Communist," but I hasten to make a reservation for fear of causing misunderstanding, or of being understood too literally. Under no circumstances must this be understood to mean that we must immediately propagate pure and strictly Communist ideas in the rural districts. As long as our rural districts still lack the material basis for Communism, to do that will be, one may say, harmful, one may say fatal, for Communism.

We must start by establishing intercourse between town and country without setting ourselves the preconceived aim of implanting Communism in the rural districts. Such an aim cannot be achieved at the present time. Such an aim is inopportune. The attempt to pursue such an aim will be harmful instead of useful to the cause.

But it is our duty to establish intercourse between the workers in the towns and the workers in the country, to establish between them the form of comradeship that can easily be created. This is one of the fundamental tasks of the working class which is now in power. In order to achieve this we must form a number of organisations (Party, trade union and private) of factory workers which

could systematically devote themselves to the task of assisting the cultural development of the rural districts.

Will it be possible to "attach" all the urban nuclei to all the village nuclei, so that every working class nucleus "attached" to a village nucleus shall systematically seek every opportunity to meet this or that cultural requirement of the nucleus it is attached to? Or will it be possible to find other forms of contacts? I merely confine myself to presenting the question in order to draw the comrades' attention to it, in order to point to the already available experience of Western Siberia (to which Comrade Khodorovsky drew my attention) and in order to present this gigantic world-historical cultural problem in its full scope.

We do almost nothing for the countryside apart from our official budget, or apart from our official communications. True, cultural relations between town and country are of themselves assuming, are inevitably assuming, a different character. Under capitalism the town brought political, economic, moral, physical, etc., corruption to the countryside. Our towns are automatically beginning to give the countryside the very opposite. But that is just the point: all this is being done automatically, spontaneously; but all this can be increased (and later increased a hundredfold) by introducing consciousness, method and system into this work.

We shall begin to make progress (and advance a hundred times more quickly) only when we study the question, when we form all sorts of workers' organisations—doing everything to avoid their bureaucratisation—in order to take up this question, to discuss it and get things done in connection with it.

January 2, 1923

INSTRUCTIONS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE TO COMMUNIST WORKERS IN THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIAT FOR EDUCATION

1) UNRESERVEDLY adhering to the position defined by the programme of the R.C.P. in regard to polytechnical education (see special points 1 and 8 in the part of the programme dealing with education), the Party must regard the reduction of the age for general and polytechnical education from seventeen to fifteen exclusively as a temporary measure of practical necessity called forth by the poverty and ruin of the country caused by the war imposed upon us by the Entente.

The introduction of vocational education for persons of 15 years of age and upwards "*in conjunction*" with "general polytechnical education" (point 8 in the section of the programme of the R.C.P. already mentioned) is absolutely obligatory everywhere, as soon as the slightest opportunity for it occurs.

2) The principal defect of the People's Commissariat for Education is its lack of practical efficiency, inadequate accounting and verification of practical experience, the absence of system in applying the lessons of this experience, and the predominance of general arguments and abstract slogans. The attention of the People's Commissar and of the collegium should be directed mainly towards combating these defects.

3) The enlistment of specialists, *i.e.*, of pedagogues having theoretical and long practical training, and of persons having such training in the sphere of vocational-technical (including agronomic) education at the centre, is improperly organised in the People's Commissariat for Education in general, and in the Chief Vocational Educational Board in particular.

The registration of such workers, the study of their experience, the verification of the results of their work, and their systematic enlistment for responsible posts in local and, particularly, in central work must be organised immediately. Not a single serious meas-

ure should be carried out without the opinion of these specialists being first obtained and without their constant co-operation.

It goes without saying that the enlistment of specialists must be carried out under two unfailing conditions: first, specialists who are not Communists must work under the control of Communists; secondly, the content of the tuition, in so far as this concerns general educational subjects, and particularly philosophy, the social sciences and Communist training, must be determined exclusively by Communists.

4) A programme for the main types of educational establishments and for courses, lectures, readings, discussions and practical lessons must be drawn up and endorsed by the collegium and the People's Commissar.

5) The Uniform Labour School Department, and in particular the Chief Vocational Education Board, must devote increased attention to more widely and systematically enlisting all suitable technical and agronomic forces for the work of vocational-technical and polytechnical education and the utilisation for that purpose of every tolerably well organised industrial and agricultural enterprise (state farm, agricultural experimental station, a well organised farm, etc., electric power stations, etc.).

The forms and the order in which business enterprises and establishments are to be used for polytechnical education are to be determined in agreement with the competent business organisations so as not to interfere with their normal operations.

6) Practical, very brief, but clear and concise forms of reporting must be devised, so that it may be possible to calculate and verify the dimensions and results of the work. The organisation of this work by the People's Commissariat for Education is extremely unsatisfactory.

7) Very unsatisfactory also is the organisation of the distribution of newspapers, pamphlets, magazines and books in school and other libraries and reading rooms. The result is that only a thin stratum of Soviet employees are able to obtain newspapers and books, while workers and peasants obtain extremely few. This business must be fundamentally reorganised.

THE TASKS OF THE WORKING WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN THE SOVIET REPUBLIC

*Speech Delivered at the Fourth Moscow City Non-Party Conference
of Women Workers, September 23, 1919*

COMRADES, I have much pleasure in greeting this conference of working women. I shall take the liberty of not dealing with those themes and questions which, of course, most interest every working woman and every class conscious member of the toiling masses. These are the most burning questions—the question of bread and of our military situation. But, as I have learnt from the newspaper reports of your meetings, these questions have been exhaustively dealt with by Comrade Trotsky, who dealt with the military situation, and Comrades Yakovleva and Svidersky, who dealt with the bread question—and so permit me to refrain from dealing with them.

I should like to say a few words about the general tasks of the working women's movement in the Soviet Republic; the tasks connected with the transition to Socialism in general, as well as those which are so persistently forcing their way to the forefront at the present time. Comrades, the question of the position of women was raised by the Soviet government from the very outset. In my opinion, the task of every workers' state that is passing to Socialism will be of a twofold character. The first part of this task is comparatively easy and simple. It is connected with the old laws which placed women in an inferior position as compared with men.

Long long ago, the representatives of all liberation movements in Western Europe not only for decades but for centuries demanded the abolition of these obsolete laws and the establishment of legal equality between men and women. But not a single European democratic state, not one of the most advanced republics, has suc-

ceeded in achieving this, because where capitalism exists, where the private ownership of the land, the private ownership of factories and works is preserved, where the power of capital is preserved, men will retain their privileges. We succeeded in achieving this in Russia only because on November 7 (October 25), 1917, the power of the workers was established. From the very outset the Soviet government set itself the aim of existing as the government of the toilers opposed to all exploitation. It set itself the aim of destroying the possibility of the landlords and capitalists exploiting the toilers, of destroying the rule of capital. The aim of the Soviet government was to create the conditions in which the toilers could build their own lives without the private ownership of the land, without the private ownership of the factories and works, without that private ownership which everywhere, all over the world, even where complete political liberty reigns, even in the most democratic republics, actually placed the toilers in conditions of poverty and wage slavery, and placed women in a position of double slavery.

The Soviet government, as the government of the toilers, during the very first months of its existence, brought about a complete revolution in the laws affecting women. Of the laws which placed women in a subordinate position not a trace has been left in the Soviet Republic. I speak precisely of those laws which particularly took advantage of woman's weaker position and put her in an inferior and often in a degrading position; I refer to the divorce laws, the laws concerning children born out of wedlock, the right of a woman to sue the father of her child for maintenance.

It is precisely in this sphere that in bourgeois law, one must say, even in the most advanced countries, advantage is taken of woman's weaker position to make her inferior and to degrade her; and it is precisely in this sphere that the Soviet government has destroyed every trace of the old unjust laws, which were intolerable for the representatives of the toiling masses. And we can now proudly say without the slightest exaggeration that except for Soviet Russia there is not a single country in the world in which there is complete equality between men and women and in which women are not placed in a degraded position, which is particularly felt in

everyday family life. This was one of our first and most important tasks.

If you happen to come in contact with parties which are hostile to the Bolsheviks, or if Russian newspapers published in the regions occupied by Kolchak or Denikin happen to fall into your hands, or if you happen to speak with people who share the views of these newspapers, you will often hear accusations to the effect that the Soviet government has violated democracy.

We, the representatives of the Soviet government, the Bolshevik Communists and adherents of Soviet government, are constantly being accused of having violated democracy, and the evidence advanced to prove this is that the Soviet government dispersed the Constituent Assembly. Our usual reply to these charges is: The democracy and the Constituent Assembly which arose under the system of private ownership of land—when people were not equal, when those who owned capital were the masters and the rest worked for them, were their wage slaves—were of no value at all to us. Such democracy served as a screen to conceal slavery even in the most advanced states. We Socialists are adherents of democracy only to the extent that it alleviates the position of the toilers and oppressed. All over the world Socialism pursues the aim of fighting against all exploitation of man by man. We attach real significance to the democracy which serves the exploited, those who are placed in a position of inferiority. If non-toilers are deprived of the franchise, that is real equality. He who does not work shall not eat. In reply to these accusations we say that the question that should be put is: How is democracy carried out in this or that state? We see that equality is proclaimed in all democratic republics, but in civil law, and in the laws governing the position of women in the family, in regard to divorce, we see inequality and the degradation of women at every step. And we say: This is the violation of democracy, and precisely in regard to the oppressed. The Soviet government has applied democracy to a greater extent than even the most advanced countries by refraining from putting into its laws the slightest hint that women are inferior. I repeat, not a single state and not a single legislature has done half of what the Soviet government did for women in the first months of its existence.

Of course, laws are not enough, and we cannot under any circumstances be satisfied merely with what we say in our laws; but we have done all that was expected of us to make women equal with men, and we have a right to be proud of what we have done. The position of women in Soviet Russia is now an ideal position from the point of view of the most advanced states. But we say to ourselves: Of course this is only a beginning.

As long as women are engaged in housework their position is still a restricted one. In order to achieve the complete emancipation of women and to make them really equal with men, we must have social economy, and the participation of women in general productive labour. Then women will occupy the same position as men.

This, of course, does not mean that women must be exactly equal with men in productivity of labour, amount of labour, length of the working day, conditions of labour, etc. But it does mean that women shall not be in an oppressed economic position compared with men. You all know that even with the fullest equality, women are still in an actual position of inferiority because all housework is thrust upon them. Most of this housework is the most unproductive, most barbarous and most arduous work that women perform. This labour is extremely petty and contains nothing that facilitates the development of women.

In pursuit of our Socialist ideals we want to fight for the complete realisation of Socialism, and here a wide field of work is opened up for women. We are now seriously preparing to clear the ground for Socialist construction; and the construction of Socialist society will commence only when we, having achieved the complete equality of women, take up our new work together with women who are emancipated from petty, stultifying, unproductive work. This work is sufficient to last us for many, many years. This work cannot produce such quick results and will not create such a striking effect.

We are establishing model institutions, dining rooms and crèches, which will liberate women from housework. And it is precisely the women who must undertake the work of building these institutions. It must be said that at present there are very

few institutions in Russia that could help the women to liberate themselves from their state of domestic slavery. Their number is insignificant, and the conditions in which the Soviet Republic is now placed—the military and food conditions about which the other comrades have spoken to you at length—hinder us in this work. Nevertheless, it must be said that the institutions which liberate women from their position of domestic slavery are springing up wherever it is possible for them to do so. We say that the emancipation of the workers must be brought about by the workers themselves, and similarly, the emancipation of women workers must be brought about by the women workers themselves. Women workers themselves should see to the development of such institutions; and their activities in this field will lead to a complete change from the position they formerly occupied in capitalist society.

In order to engage in politics in the old capitalist society, special training was required; that is why women's participation in politics, even in the most advanced and free capitalist countries, is insignificant. Our task is to make politics accessible to every toiling woman. From the moment the private ownership of land and factories was abolished and the power of the landlords and capitalists was overthrown, the tasks of politics became simple, clear and quite accessible to all the toiling masses, and to the toiling women. In capitalist society women are placed in such an inferior position that their participation in politics is insignificant compared with that of men. In order to change this state of affairs the rule of the toilers is required, and when that is achieved the principal tasks of politics will consist of all that which directly concerns the fate of the toilers themselves.

And here the participation of the women workers, not only of Party and class conscious women workers, but also of non-party and the least class conscious, is necessary. In this respect, the Soviet government opens up a wide field of activity for women workers.

We have experienced very hard times in the struggle against the forces hostile to Soviet Russia which are marching against us. It has been very hard for us to fight in the military field against

these forces which are waging war against the rule of the toilers, and in the food field against the profiteers, because the number of people, of toilers, who come forward wholeheartedly to help us by their labour, is not yet sufficiently large. And so the Soviet government prizes nothing so highly as the assistance of the broad masses of non-party working women. Let them know that in the old bourgeois society a complicated training was required in order to engage in political activity, and that this was inaccessible to women. But the principal aim of political activity in the Soviet Republic is to fight against the landlords and the capitalists, to fight for the abolition of exploitation; and this opens for the women workers in the Soviet Republic a field for political activity which will consist of utilising their organising ability to help the men.

We not only need organisational work on a scale affecting millions, we also need organisational work on the smallest scale that woman will also be able to engage in. Women can work amidst war conditions, when it is a matter of helping the army, of carrying on agitation in its ranks. Women must take an active part in this, so that the Red Army may see that it is being cared for and looked after. Women may also work in the food field, in distributing food, in improving mass catering, in developing the dining rooms which have now been opened on such a wide scale in Petrograd.

In these fields of activity the working women acquire real organisational significance. The participation of women is required in the organisation of large experimental enterprises and in supervising them so that this shall not be the work of single persons. Without the participation of a large number of toiling women in this work, it cannot be fulfilled. And working women are quite suitable in this field, for such work as supervising the distribution of food and seeing that provisions are more easily obtained. This is work that non-party working women can easily do, and this work will, in its turn, most of all help firmly to establish Socialist society.

Abolishing the private ownership of land and almost entirely abolishing the private ownership of factories and works, the Soviet government strives to enlist all toilers, not only Party, but also non-party, not only men, but also women, in the work of economic

construction. This work begun by the Soviet government can be advanced only when, instead of hundreds of women, we have millions and millions of women, all over Russia, taking part in it. When that is the case, we are convinced, the work of Socialist construction will be firmly established. Then the toilers will show that they can live and administer without the landlords and capitalists. Then Socialist construction will be so firmly established in Russia that the Soviet Republic will have no cause to fear any external enemies in other countries, or enemies within Russia.

INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN'S DAY

THE main and fundamental thing in Bolshevism and in the Russian October Revolution is the drawing into politics of precisely those who were most oppressed under capitalism. These were oppressed, deceived and robbed by the capitalists under a monarchy as well as in democratic, bourgeois republics. This oppression, this deception, this filching the toil of the people by the capitalists was inevitable as long as the private ownership of the land, the factories and works existed.

The essence of Bolshevism, the essence of Soviet power, lies in exposing the fraud and hypocrisy of bourgeois democracy, in abolishing the private ownership of the land, the factories and works, and in concentrating all political power in the hands of the toilers and the exploited masses. These masses are taking politics, *i.e.*, the work of building the new society, into their own hands. This is a difficult task; the masses are downtrodden and oppressed by capitalism; but there is no other way out of wage slavery, of slavery to the capitalists, nor can there be any other way out.

And it is impossible to draw the masses into politics without also drawing in the women; for under capitalism, the female half of the human race suffers under a double yoke. The working woman and peasant woman are oppressed by capital; but in addition to that, even in the most democratic of bourgeois republics, they are, firstly, in an inferior position because the law denies them equality with men, and secondly, and this is most important, they are "in domestic slavery," they are "domestic slaves," crushed by the most petty, most menial, most arduous, and most stultifying work of the kitchen, and by isolated domestic, family economy in general.

The Bolshevik, Soviet Revolution cuts at the root of the op-

pression and inferiority of women more deeply than any party or any revolution in the world has dared to do. Not a trace of inequality between men and women before the law has been left in Soviet Russia. The particularly base, despicable and hypocritical inequality of marital and family rights, inequality in relation to the child, has been completely abolished by the Soviet government.

This is only the first step towards the emancipation of women. But not a single bourgeois republic, even the most democratic, has dared to take even this first step. They dared not do so out of fear of "the sacred right of private property."

The second and principal step was the abolition of the private ownership of the land, the factories and works. This, and this alone, opens the way for the complete and real emancipation of women, their emancipation from "domestic slavery," by passing from petty, individual, domestic economy to large-scale social economy.

This transition is a difficult one, for it is a matter of remoulding the most deep-rooted, habitual, case-hardened and ossified "system" (it would be more true to say, "outrage and barbarism," and not "system"). But the transition has been started. Things have begun to move, we have started out on the new path.

On International Working Women's Day, in all countries in the world, at innumerable meetings of working women, greetings will be sent to Soviet Russia, which has started on unprecedentedly difficult and arduous, but great, universally great, and really liberating work. Encouraging appeals will be made not to lose heart in face of the raging and often brutal bourgeois reaction. The more "free" or "democratic" the bourgeois country is, the more the capitalist gangs rave and commit their brutalities against the workers' revolution. An example of this is the democratic republic of the United States of America. But the masses of the workers have already awakened. The imperialist war has finally roused these slumbering, half-asleep, conservative masses in America, in Europe and backward Asia.

The ice has broken in all parts of the world.

The emancipation of the peoples from the yoke of imperialism,

the emancipation of the workers, men and women, from the yoke of capital, is moving irresistibly forward. This cause is being advanced by scores and hundreds of millions of working men and women and peasant men and women. That is why the emancipation of labour from the yoke of capital will be achieved the world over.

March 4, 1921

THE CHARACTER OF OUR NEWSPAPERS

MUCH too much space is devoted to political agitation on old themes—political fireworks. Too little space is devoted to the building of a new life, to facts and facts about this.

Why not write twenty or ten lines instead of two hundred or four hundred about simple, generally known and clear things, which are already understood by the masses to a large extent, such as the despicable treachery of the Mensheviks, the lackeys of the bourgeoisie, the Anglo-Japanese invasion for the purpose of restoring the sacred rights of capital,¹ the American billionaires gnashing their teeth against Germany, etc., etc.? It is necessary to write about these things, to note every new fact about them; but it is not necessary to write articles about them, to repeat arguments. It is only necessary to write a few lines, in "telegraphic form," condemning the new manifestations of the old, already well known, benumbing politics.

In the "good old bourgeois times" the bourgeois press never referred to the "holy of holies"—the situation in private factories, in private enterprises. This suited the interests of the bourgeoisie. But we must radically dissociate ourselves from this. We have *not* dissociated ourselves from it. The type of our newspapers has *not* yet changed in the way it should have changed in a society passing from capitalism to Socialism.

Less politics. Politics have been fully "cleared up" and have been reduced to the struggle between two camps: the camp of the proletariat in rebellion and that of a handful of capitalist slave-owners (with their pack of hounds, including the Mensheviks and others). I repeat, these politics can and should be dealt with very briefly.

¹ This refers to the participation of Great Britain and Japan in the civil war against the Soviet Republic.—*Ed.*

More economics. But not economics in the sense of "general" arguments, scientific reviews, plans drawn up by intellectuals, and other twaddle of that sort, which, unfortunately, is too often just twaddle. No, we want economics in the sense of collecting, *carefully testing* and studying the facts of the actual building up of the new life. Are successes *really* being achieved by the big factories, the agricultural communes, Committees of Poor Peasants and local Councils of National Economy in the building of the new *economy*? What sort of successes? Are they proved? Is there not some fiction, boastfulness, promises by intellectuals ("being organised," "a plan has been drawn up," "exerting efforts," "now pledge ourselves," "improvements beyond doubt," and other charlatan plans in the drawing up of which "we" are past masters) in these reports? How were these successes achieved? How can they be extended?

Where is the black list of factories which are lagging behind, which after the factories were nationalised remained models of confusion, disintegration, filthiness, hooliganism and idleness? It does not exist. But there *are* factories of this kind. We are failing to perform our duty if we refrain from waging *war* against these "guardians of the traditions of capitalism." We are not Communists but rag-pickers as long as we quietly tolerate such factories. We lack the ability to wage the class war in the newspapers as the bourgeoisie waged it. Remember how well it *hounded its* class enemies in its press, how it sneered at them, abused them and made their lives misery. What about us? Does not the class struggle in the epoch of transition from capitalism to Socialism mean protecting the interests of the working *class* against the handfuls, groups, strata of workers who persistently cling to the traditions (habits) of capitalism and continue to look at the Soviet state in the old way, *i.e.*, give "it" as little work as possible, and of the worst quality possible and squeeze out of "it" as much money as possible? Are there not many such scoundrels, say, among the compositors in Soviet printing offices, among the Sormovo and Putilov workers, etc.? How many of these have we caught, how many of these have we exposed, how many have we pilloried?

The press says nothing about this. If it does say anything it

says it in an official, bureaucratic way, not in the way it should be said by the *revolutionary* press. not in the way it should be said by the organ of the *dictatorship* of the class which by its deeds is showing that the resistance of the capitalists and the loafers who are guarding capitalist habits will be smashed with an iron hand.

It is the same with the war. Do we denounce cowardly officers and men? Have we disgraced the inefficient regiments in the eyes of Russia? Have we "caught" a sufficient number of the worst examples which should, with the greatest possible publicity, be expelled from the army, as being useless, negligent, unpunctual, etc.? We are not waging a practical, ruthless and truly revolutionary war against the concrete carriers of evil. Too little is being done to train the masses with the help of living, concrete examples from all spheres of life—and yet this is the principal task of the press in the period of transition from capitalism to Communism. Not enough attention is being paid to the *workaday* side of factory, village and regimental life, where the new system is being built most of all, which most of all needs attention, publicity, public criticism, the denunciation of the useless and the appeal to learn from the good examples.

Less political fireworks. Less intellectual arguments. Get closer to life. More attention to the way the masses of the workers and peasants are *actually* building something new in their everyday work. More *testing* to ascertain to what extent this something new is *Communistic*.

September 1918

ERRATA

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>Reads</i>	<i>Should Read</i>
114	6 down	<i>A guerre, comme à la guerre</i>	<i>A la guerre, comme à la guerre</i>
144	14 down	Krondstadt	Kronstadt
146	4 down	vanguish	vanquish
171	21 down	monoply	monopoly
241	15 down	slight	sight
290	Running head	The Economic Policy—1921	The New Economic Policy—1921
290	12 up	any	an

